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Philadelphia, May 15, 1835.

CONTENTS.



PENCIL SKETCHES.

THE WILSON HOUSE;

OR,

VILLAGE GOSSIP.

"Mark how a plain tale shall put you down."—*Shakspeare.*

"Have you heard the news?" said Mrs. Brown to Mrs. Green, as they met, one morning, at the principal store in the village of Thebes, a place which all our topographers have most unaccountably forgotten to insert in their maps of the State of New York.

"No," replied Mrs. Green. "It is a long time since there was any news in Thebes."

"Well," said Mrs. Brown, "the Wilson House is taken at last."

"Indeed!—And who has taken it?"

B

"Oh! I don't know; but my Phillis saw the windows open this morning; and old Polly Splatterfloor busy white-washing."

"I wonder," observed Mrs. Green, "that Phillis did not ask Polly. Of course she could have told who hired her."

"Why, to tell the truth," answered Mrs. Brown, "Phillis did inquire, and Polly said the name of the family was either Jones, or Clark, or Thomson; though she could not exactly remember which. But Polly is so stupid that she never can understand names, and Phillis so giddy that she always forgets them."

"Did Phillis make no further inquiries?" asked Mrs. Green.

"To be sure she did," replied Mrs. Brown. "But you know old Polly Splatterfloor is so deaf that she can scarcely hear, and has so few teeth that she can scarcely speak, and is, besides, apt to be cross when she is white-washing. So she told Phillis to mind her own business, and make haste home with her market-basket, and not stand there hindering her."

Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Green having finished their purchases at the store, walked on together, making various conjectures to each other about the people that had taken the Wilson House, which was one of the best in the town, and which originally

belonged to a family of that name, who had long since removed to the metropolis.

As is the case in most American villages, the female population of Thebes far outnumbered the male; and the matrimonial market being extremely deficient in the article of young men, the ladies, in default of other occupation, were much addicted to reforming the world and improving the condition of the universe. They not only kept a close watch over the little community immediately around them, but they had lately taken the Pelew Islands under their protection, and had formed a society for the purpose of supplying the wants (both mental and physical) of these amiable savages—the history of Prince Lee Boo having convinced them that his countrymen were a people whose capacities were great, and whose necessities were numerous.

One learned Theban, a lady, whose chief study was that voluminous work *mis*called the Library of *Entertaining* Knowledge, was engaged in writing a series of papers on Natural Science, to be translated into Pelew, whenever a professor of that language could be found; and another was employed on an octavo of six hundred pages, designated "a Synopsis of Ancient History," also to be translated by the same linguist, and for the especial benefit of the same benighted islanders.

But the largest proportion of the members of this praise-worthy society being ladies whose stockings were but narrowly striped with blue, they were content to be employed in making up long flannel jackets, substantial quilted bonnets, and thick double calico wrappers, to supersede the airy costume of the females of Pelew; who, though living in the vicinity of the equator, were, as yet, strangers to the comforts of warm clothing.

The weekly meetings of the Pelew Island Society were held in a ci-devant school-room directly opposite to the Wilson House—and on the day subsequent to that on which our story commences, the ladies all happened to find themselves at the place of rendezvous, by two o'clock in the afternoon, an hour before the usual time. There was much discussion on the new tenants of the Wilson House—the owner of which lived, as we have stated, in the city. And Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Green gave in their evidence.

Mrs. Pettyfact deponed that her son Johnny (a boy of ten years old, who lived mostly about the wharves) had seen, early that morning, a number of packing-boxes landed from a tow-boat and put into two carts. The boxes were escorted by a man servant, a stout mulatto, very much marked with the small-pox, or, perhaps, only the varioloid. He was

dressed in a brown cloth coatee, gray trowsers, and a green and yellow striped waistcoat; the stripes going lengthwise, if Johnny was not mistaken. The coloured man's hat was good, but not quite new. The boxes evidently contained furniture; and on the top of the last cart rode a dog-house—which was not surprising, as the servant was followed by a large black and white dog, which Johnny knew to be a pointer, and therefore valuable. The dog's name was either Bingo or Mingo, for he heard the man call him so.

Mrs. Pettyfact finished her narrative by informing the company that dear little Johnny had traced the carts (that is, followed them) to the Wilson House. And Mrs. Scentwell asserted that she knew, from good authority, that two female servants, one black and one white, had arrived in the steamboat that had stopped at Thebes about noon; and that they also had gone to the mansion in question.

Putting all these things together, it was evident that the strangers had furniture, servants, and a dog.

As the ladies of Thebes looked down into the Wilson House they saw the furniture unpacked, or unpacking, and some of it already arranged. Curiosity increases by feeding, and they would now have

given almost any sum to be inside of the house, with an opportunity of close inspection.

They saw a long rough box, which, from its apparent weight, when moved, was declared by Mrs. Cobalt to contain minerals, and she was, therefore, convinced that the stranger was a man of science. Mrs. Warspite rather believed that he was a British spy, and that the box was heavy with British gold. They were so fortunate as to see it opened, and they found that it contained the kitchen clock.

Among the objects that were not familiar to our fair Thebans they perceived something that was only intelligible to Miss Cherubina Moonshine, who had been educated at a city boarding-school, where she read nothing but history in public, and nothing but romance in private; and who pronounced the thing in question to be a guitar case. And this lady immediately conjectured that the expected occupants of the Wilson House were a young couple just eloped, and that this was the very guitar on which the lover had serenaded his mistress.

A square box, very strongly secured, was the next thing to be wondered at. Mrs. Dailydose pronounced it a medicine chest, and felicitated herself on the arrival of either a new doctor or a new invalid. But Miss Watermilk feared that it was rather

a liquor case, and thought it should be inquired into by the Temperance Society.

While this, the most mysterious of the boxes, was yet under discussion, a chaise, with a black leather trunk behind it, drove up to the door of the Wilson House, and a gentleman alighted from it and handed out a lady, whose figure was concealed by a shawl, and her face hidden by a close straw bonnet and a green veil. The mulatto man received them at the door, and afterwards took the chaise round to the stable. The lady entered the house immediately; but the gentleman stood a few moments on the steps, giving some directions to the servants. He was a man of middle age, neither tall nor short, nor handsome nor otherwise.

Shortly after, the lady was seen going through the rooms without her bonnet; and various indeed were the opinions respecting her, as the spectators in the opposite house pressed close to the windows and looked over each other's shoulders; though all the glimpses they could obtain of her were certainly very imperfect.

Miss Crow thought the strange lady's hair a shade too light; which very much surprised Miss Flax, to whom it appeared almost a jet black. Miss Maypole thought her entirely too short; Miss Milestone was just going to say that it was a pity

the lady should be so tall. All, however, agreed in pronouncing her young, except Miss Parchment, who advised them not to make up their minds too suddenly, as nothing was more deceptive than distance. The husband was decided, by an unanimous vote, to be *not* young, but they varied as to his most probable age—the thermometer of their opinion ranging from forty-five to seventy.

They saw him nearly all the time in one of the front parlours, which he evidently intended for a library—and once he came to the front door and looked twice up the street, and three times down it. One lady remarked that the curls on his temples were evidently those of a wig; but when he turned to go away, another pointed out to her companions that the back of his head was beginning to grow bald, and that it must be his own hair, as nobody ever wore a bald wig.

The attention of the spectators was now again directed to the mysterious square box, which, to their great delight, the gentleman was proceeding to open. They almost fell out of the window in leaning over to look, and when the lid was finally raised, every head tried to be a neck in advance of all the others.

The box was found to contain sundry articles of plate, including silver forks; the latter utensils being proof positive, in the opinion of the gazers, that

the gentleman and his lady were undoubtedly genteel people, and therefore quite proper to be countenanced by all Thebes: a place which had always held its head very high, in consequence of its universally good society, most of its inhabitants being fit to visit each other.

There was one unopened package of silver yet remaining at the bottom of the box, when a total eclipse was put upon all, by the coloured man shutting the front windows at the approach of twilight.

We need not stop to remark how little advancement was made this afternoon in the great works that were in progress for the unhappy natives of the Pelew Islands.

Next day, a brass plate was seen on the door of the Wilson House, and in half an hour all Thebes was acquainted with the fact that the name of the new resident was B. Morrison. Conjecture was next at work to divine the probable signification of the initial letter: some contending that B. stood for Benjamin, as was most natural; others suggesting that it meant Bartholomew, Basil, Bernard, or Barnabas. One man—we acknowledge that he had always been considered the greatest fool in Thebes—opined that the name might be Benedict; but this absurd conjecture was indignantly scouted by his hearers, who unanimously declared that no American could possi-

bly bear a name that had been disgraced by the traitor Arnold.

In a few days, it being supposed that Mr. and Mrs. Morrison must be quite settled in their new domicile, the Thebans thought it time to call upon them. The first visiters were their nearly opposite neighbours, Mr. and Mrs. Elliot, the clergyman and his wife; the next were the ladies that lived next door on each side; and all the rest followed suit immediately: so that long before the next weekly meeting of the Pelew Society, all its members were competent, from personal observation, to compare notes about the new residents. The substance of the reports was that the house was handsomely furnished, though neither Mrs. Brown nor Mrs. Green liked the pattern of the carpets; and that the age of the lady was somewhere between twenty and thirty; but all agreed that she was considerably younger than her husband. It was generally concluded that, on her part, the marriage must have been a mercenary one, except by Miss Moonshine, who adhered to her theory that it had been a runaway match; but she explained the anomaly of a lady eloping with a gentleman so much older than herself, by the probable conjecture that she had only done so to avoid the horrors of a union with a man *still older*, and in every respect worse, whom no

doubt her flinty-hearted parents had selected for her —very likely an old fat fellow with a real wig, and the gout in both feet.

"Now," said Miss Parchment, "I am not sure that Mrs. Morrison is so very young herself. I doubt if there are many years difference between her age and her husband's. I observed, when I called upon her the other day, that she took care to sit with her back to the light."

"Whatever may be their ages," said Mrs. Pettyfact, "I can't believe that they are people of general knowledge, or who have seen much of the world. The day I visited them, Mr. Morrison said something about 'the inhabitants of Thebes,' instead of calling us 'the Thebans,' as he ought to have done. It is astonishing what ignorance and what rudeness there is in the world. Once, when I was on a visit to my uncle Krips Vanblunk of Troy, I actually heard a Philadelphian talk to him of the 'Troy people,' instead of saying 'the Trojans,' as was right and proper. Could any thing be more disrespectful? Uncle Vanblunk was quite affronted, as he had just cause to be—he that is one of the very oldest Trojans!"

Mr. and Mrs. Morrison continued to be objects of constant speculation to the Thebans, who gossipped over every thing concerning them, till they

made mountains out of mole-hills. What was first mentioned as conjecture was repeated as fact, each report being like a snow-ball, that gathers additional snow as it rolls along. Still, every body visited the Morrisons, and various and contradictory were the opinions expressed of them, while those two important little words, "if" and "but," were in perpetual requisition whenever they were talked of. Theirs was an apt illustration of the position in which strangers frequently find themselves when they become denizens of a dull village.

Old Judge Heavyhead, whose costume was never very recherché, and who, when the court was not sitting, spent most of his time in going from house to house to get people to play chess with him, called one morning on Mr. Morrison for that purpose. As it happened, the door was opened (in the absence of the man servant) by a very simple country girl, called Becky, whom Mrs. Morrison had recently hired as an assistant waiter, and who was yet a stranger to the Thebans. On Judge Heavyhead inquiring for Mr. Morrison, the girl replied that he had gone down to the city.

"Is Mrs. Morrison at home?" said the judge—thinking he might have some chance of chess with her.

"Are you Mr. Smith?" asked the girl.

"No: I am Judge Heavyhead."

"Then," answered Becky, "I can't let you in: for Mrs. Morrison is engaged this morning. She axed me to say them very words. And she told me she couldn't see any body but Mr. Smith. She has been expecting him these two hours, and won't have nobody let in but him. I guess you will have to go away."

Judge Heavyhead went away; but the dialogue had been overheard by Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Green, who were passing at the time arm in arm, and who loitered and lingered near the door to distinguish what was said.

In the course of the morning, all Thebes was alive with the rumour that Mr. Morrison having gone on a long journey about some important business, his wife had taken advantage of his absence, and made an appointment with Mr. Smith—the only doubt was what Mr. Smith it could be—some said it was Hopestill Smith, the young lawyer that occupied a front closet in Mrs. Poorstock's boarding-house, and who, while waiting for clients, spent all his time in writing poetry, and manufacturing dreadful accidents for the newspaper, entitled "The Thebes Enlightener and Recorder." Other conjecturers were certain that it was Lieutenant Smith

of the army, who had arrived at the hotel only the evening before.

"So much for old men marrying young wives!" said the widow Cumberley, a lady of unlimited dimensions, who had six grown up sons settled in different parts of the Union.

Unfortunately, this was not the afternoon for the meeting of the Pelew Islands Society. But, somehow, half the ladies of Thebes happened to drop in at Mrs. Elliot's, whose residence was nearly opposite to that of Mrs. Morrison. The report of her expecting a visit from Mr. Smith—and refusing admittance to all but him—was vehemently discussed: some contending that it was the lawyer, others arguing that it was the officer. Mrs. Elliot was asked by every lady that came in, if she had seen either of these gentlemen enter Mrs. Morrison's door. She always replied in the negative, declaring, however, that she had not looked out at a front window all day; and maintaining her entire disbelief of the whole story. Mrs. Elliot was, indeed, a good and sensible woman, who had no curiosity about the proceedings of her neighbours, and never joined in the gossip and scandal of the village.

On comparing notes, it was found that the Mr. Smith—whichever he might be—had not been ac-

tually seen by any one to go into Mrs. Morrison's house. It was, therefore, naturally concluded that he had not yet gone, and divers reasons were assigned for his remissness in keeping the appointment. But all hoped that he was still to go, and, therefore, every one kept as near Mrs. Elliot's front windows as possible.

Suddenly, a wheelbarrow loaded with bricks and mortar was seen to approach the Wilson House, followed by a boy, and proceeded by old John Smith, the town bricklayer, who, it seems, had been totally forgotten in the speculations on Mrs. Morrison's mysterious visiter. The bricklayer and his train entered at the side-gate. Soon after, a Venetian blind was raised from the window of the little front parlour that Mr. Morrison had converted into a library. Mrs. Morrison was seen to enter the room in her morning dress, accompanied by the bricklayer, to whom she was evidently giving directions about the setting of a Franklin stove, the component parts of which lay ready on the hearth. From some fruit stains on her brown linen apron, it was conjectured that she had been employed in making sweetmeats.

"Now, ladies," said Mrs. Elliot, "you see the solution of the riddle."

"But, who would have thought of old John Smith

the bricklayer!" said Mrs. Overlook. "And who could possibly have supposed that the appointment was only to set a stove! And who could have guessed that Mrs. Morrison was making sweatmeats."

"All these things," replied Mrs. Elliot, "we might have guessed easily, but that we have given ourselves a habit of attaching something of mystery to every thing connected with these strangers."

"But you must acknowledge," said Mrs. Overlook, "that there is something about them not easy to understand."

"By no means," replied Mrs. Elliot; "I have always found them perfectly comprehensible."

"But as there is really considerable intimacy between you and Mrs. Morrison," said Miss Moonshine, "it is amazing that she has never yet related to you her story."

"Why should she?" answered Mrs. Elliot. "There is, most likely, no story to relate. Mr. and Mrs. Morrison 'keep the even tenor of their way,' and most likely they have always done so. And it is not probable that they are fully aware of all the wonders that seem expected of them."

"But still it is very surprising," said the Widow Cumberley, "that Mrs. Morrison's Becky, fool as she is, should mistake Judge Heavyhead coming to

play chess, for old John Smith the bricklayer, come to set the stove."

"Not at all," said Mrs. Elliot, "Judge Heavy-head certainly does not carry his profession in his looks, and he looks as much like a bricklayer as any thing else."

During the two succeeding days, the strictest scrutiny did not detect a man at Mrs. Morrison's door, except the butcher and the baker. On the third day, there was a vague report that a painter had been seen going in; and as a young artist had lately arrived from the city, on a sketching tour, and had taken Thebes in his way along the banks of the river, it was at once supposed that Mrs. Morrison was getting her portrait painted by Mr. Carmine; and it was considered very astonishing that she should have it done in her husband's absence. Miss Moonshine concluded that Mr. Carmine was undoubtedly a former lover of Mrs. Morrison's, and that the picture was intended for the artist himself to carry away with him.

In the course of that day, half the ladies of Thebes walked past the Wilson House, that they might have a chance of seeing the artist coming in or going out; for as Mr. Carmine had announced that he should proceed on his tour at the close of

the week, it was supposed that Mrs. Morrison must sit both morning and afternoon, to enable him to finish the picture. Just as four couple of ladies were passing the door, out came Dick Putty, the house-painter, pots and all. The fair Thebans stopped short, and looked at each other; and Miss Moonshine could not refrain from inquiring of Dick Putty what he had been doing at Mrs. Morrison's. He replied that "he had only been painting the back porch," and passed on.

Mr. Morrison came home the next day; and for a few weeks every thing went on quietly.

At last, the whole community of Thebes was thrown into consternation by a rumour that Mrs. Morrison had attempted to poison her husband. Some asserted that she had put arsenic into his tea, and that having detected it in time, he had been heard to accuse her of it. Others affirmed that he had discovered lumps of verdigrease in a saucer of peach marmelade, which his wife had prepared. Some, however, averred that the marmelade was quince. A third version of the story, represented that "to make assurance doubly sure," Mrs. Morrison had employed both arsenic and verdigrease; and that her husband had drank the tea and eaten the marmelade; and that the only reason why he was not dead, resulted from the promptitude with

which he sent for Dr. Mix, who had immediately administered a successful antidote. This last account of the affair being the most absurd, was the most generally credited; notwithstanding that Dr. Mix declared that he had never been sent for to attend Mr. Morrison on this or on any other occasion. It was then hinted, (but hinted very obscurely,) that the doctor must have been bribed to silence, as the Morrisons would naturally think it expedient to have the thing hushed up as much as possible. But great surprise was excited when this inexplicable couple were seen walking together as amicably as usual. Nay, Mrs. Morrison had been heard to say to her husband, with consummate assurance,—"My dear, what can be the reason that the people are all running to their doors and windows?" as if it were possible she did not know that it was to see herself and Mr. Morrison pass; for now, of course, they were greater sights than ever.

"The artfulness of some women is as awful as their wickedness," said the Widow Cumberley. "She has doubtless persuaded her doting husband that she is entirely innocent of the attempt on his life. So much for old men marrying young wives! What can they expect but arsenic and verdigrease."

Though many of the Thebans could not in their hearts give credit to the story, yet all professed

belief, except Mr. and Mrs. Elliot, who steadily persisted in the opinion that, if not a base and unfounded fabrication, it was at least a gross misrepresentation of some very simple fact. Mrs. Elliot at last traced the story to Miss Dullard, a lady who kept house for her father, a widower. Miss Dullard said she had heard it from her cook, who had heard it from Mrs. Morrison's foolish maid Becky. "And of course," observed Miss Dullard, "the girl could have had no motive for telling a falsehood, or raising a story without sufficient foundation."

Mrs. Elliot tried to convince her that foolish and vulgar-minded people, (ladies as well as servants,) frequently act and talk without any motive at all.

The nine day's wonder had not yet subsided, when Mrs. Elliot had occasion to employ one of the village mantua-makers, Miss Barford, who had been passing a week in the city, from whence she had just returned. This mantua-maker was a sensible and respectable woman, who had seen better days, and was treated with much consideration by all the best families of Thebes. While she was sewing with Mrs. Elliot, Miss Dullard came in to pay a visit, and walked familiarly up stairs. As Miss Dullard had been one of the first promulgators of the story, she thought it her duty to keep it up. Besides which, when she did get a new idea into

her head (which was but seldom) she always pushed it as far as it would go.

Miss Dullard began, as usual, upon the still prevailing topic of Mrs. Morrison's attempt to poison her husband; asking Mrs. Elliot if she had heard any thing further on the subject.

"Is it possible," exclaimed Miss Barford, "that Mrs. Morrison can be even suspected of such a thing."

"More than suspected, I can assure you," replied Miss Dullard, "for her Becky told my Debby, that she had heard Mr. Morrison accuse his wife of it, last Friday week, at their own tea-table. Why, where have you been, Miss Barford, not to have heard of it? All Thebes is full of nothing else."

"I have been down in the city," replied Miss Barford, "and I only came home last evening."

"But was it on Friday week, do you say? I happened then to be at work at Mrs. Morrison's—I was at the tea-table with them; and I can assure you all that passed was no more than this. Mrs. Morrison asked her husband if she should help him to some peach marmelade. He inquired if it had been done in a bell-mettle kettle. She answered in the affirmative, adding that she had always been in the practice of using such a utensil for sweetmeats. "It is time to leave it off then," said Mr. Morrison.

"I saw the other day in a newspaper, an account of a whole family being poisoned by eating preserved plums, that had set all night in a bell-mettle kettle. Therefore, I cannot bring myself to relish any of this marmelade: believing it to have a taint of verdigrease, and considering all such sweetmeats as a slow poison."

"And was that all?" asked Miss Dullard, looking disappointed.

"It was all that passed at the tea-table," replied Miss Barford. "But just then the girl Becky came in with a fresh plate of muffins, and I suppose she only heard the latter part of the conversation. For after tea, when Mrs. Morrison took me into the garden to show me her autumn flowers, we heard Becky say to the cook, as we passed the kitchen windows—"Mary, do you know that presarves is pison!"—"I don't know no such thing," replied the cook, "nor you neither."—"Yes, indeed," said Becky, "I heard Mr. Morrison tell his wife so." "*Her* presarves may be," said the cook, "for she wouldn't let me make them: though I guess I know how a great deal better than she. I dare say she has done them bad enough, peach marmelade and all."—"Well," said Becky, "I heard him tell her there was verdigrease in them, and every body knows that's rank pison."—"Then she must have

put it in herself," exclaimed the cook; "I am sure the kettle was clean, for she made me scour it long enough before she began to use it."

"We were much amused with this ridiculous dialogue," continued Miss Barford, "and Mrs. Morrison said to me laughing—"The adage is true that listeners hear no good of themselves, so we will walk on and look at the flowers."

"And now, ladies, I positively declare to you, that this is the whole story, and the simple truth. I thought nothing more about it, being well aware that servants are in the frequent practice of talking of their employers behind their backs, in a manner they would not dare to do before their faces; also, that they have a bad habit of saying on these occasions much more than they think or believe."

"Well," resumed Miss Dullard, "I can assure you that Becky came directly to my Debby, and informed her that she had heard Mr. Morrison say there was poison in the marmelade that was on the tea-table, and that Mary the cook had told her she saw Mrs. Morrison herself put verdigrease into the preserving kettle."

"And this," said Mrs. Elliot, "is a tolerably fair specimen of the progress of a lie. That this outrageous piece of scandal had little or no foundation, I never doubted from the first. Now that

Miss Barford has so well explained it, I hope every one will make a point of stopping its circulation, and giving currency to the real fact."

We are sorry to say that very few of the circulators set about contradicting the story with half the alacrity they had shown in spreading it; not a single Theban taking the trouble (as in the former case) to go all over the village for the express purpose. Consequently a large majority remained, or pretended to remain, in their first impression.

In the course of a week, to the great astonishment of all Thebes, the Morrisons sent round notes of invitation for a party. Notwithstanding that all Thebes had determined to drop the Morrisons, every body concluded to go to their party. Some alleged no other motive than curiosity to see how their host and hostess would behave after all that had passed. Others remarked, very justly, that a party was a party. Many thought that the Morrisons were about to leave Thebes, and that this entertainment was by way of farewell, and that therefore their guests would have no farther occasion to countenance them.

At all events, every body went to the party except the Elliots, who always declined large companies, and all were unusually punctual in going at the specified hour. The composure of Mr. Morri-

son, and the smiling affability of his wife, excited much surprise. There were whispers of "Some people have the face for any thing." And one lady who read French, and had gone through Sevigné's Letters, spoke of Madame Brinvilliers, the famous empoisonneuse. "Well, I must say," whispered Miss Moonshine, "that Mrs. Morrison does not look at all like a person who could be guilty of such a crime. It seems to me that murderesses must always be very tall women, with aquiline noses, large black eyes, heavy brows, and a curl of the upper lip."

The evening passed on. Mr. and Mrs. Morrison exerted themselves to entertain their guests, none of whom seemed exactly *au naturel*, being somewhat embarrassed by the consciousness of what they had said about their host and hostess. The refreshments were abundant and excellent: and the ladies of Thebes began to think it scarcely possible that one who provided such delicious creams and jellies, could have even *thought* of poisoning her husband. Gradually, their belief came to be decidedly shaken, particularly when some very fine stewed terapin was handed round.

At length the evening drew to a close, and there were symptoms of the party breaking up; when Mr. Morrison, exchanging looks with his wife, re-

quested the company to remain a little longer, as he had a few words to say to them. This intimation produced a sort of dismay in the audience, who all had a misgiving of something that they would not like to hear. Some glanced towards the door, some surveyed the carpet, some slipped behind others, and all looked queer.

"Ladies and gentlemen—but ladies most particularly"—said Mr. Morrison, advancing into the middle of the room, "I beg your pardon for having kept you so long in suspense as to the history of myself and wife. I now see the wisdom of the plan of Dr. Franklin, who, on stopping at a village tavern, called round him all its inmates, and at once anticipated their curiosity, by informing them exactly who and what he was. In humble imitation of that truly great man, I now take occasion to tell you that my name is Barclay Morrison, and that I was born in the city of New York, on the second of April, 1790, which makes my present age forty-two. This is my wife, Maria Morrison, born at Hartford, in Connecticut, on the 15th of June, 1803, which makes her present age twenty-seven. Her maiden name was Simmons. Her family lived in New York when I first became acquainted with her. We had a regular courtship, and were publicly married with the consent of all our relatives, in St. Paul's church,

on the 12th of September, 1824; therefore we have been man and wife about six years. We had each a father and mother, and we have also, like most other people, brothers and sisters, aunts, uncles, and cousins—but we never had any children.

"Having made some money in business (as an importer of British goods) I concluded to retire from the bustle of a city life, and try the experiment of living in a quiet village. Therefore I rented the Wilson House for a year: it being highly recommended to me by the owner, with whom I have long been acquainted. In this way, Mrs. Morrison and myself have become residents of Thebes. My wife has nothing remarkable about her—neither have I. She cultivates flowers, reads novels, works muslin, plays on the guitar, superintends her household affairs, and occasionally makes confectionary. I read travels, biographies, reviews and newspapers, go shooting, play chess, and walk and ride with my wife.

"To sum up all in a few words—we are no particular sort of people, as the town of Thebes might have discovered long ago. And lastly, I think it a duty I owe to Mrs. Morrison, to inform you that we have sent to the city for a nest of enamelled or porcelain kettles of various sizes; and, therefore, we have done with bell-mettle and verdigrease for ever. Having

exactly explained our present position, I conclude that we may now be allowed to amalgamate quietly with the rest of our towns-people. And I promise to let you know whenever any thing extraordinary happens to us."

The guests now looked remarkably foolish, and were much at a loss how to proceed. Some tried to laugh, and some attempted to apologise. But the Morrisons insisted on dispensing a general amnesty, and passing an act of oblivion on all that had been said and done.

Being now impatient to get away, the whole company took leave simultaneously; and, on this evening, there was no reason to apprehend that any of them, like Romeo and Juliet, would say "good night till it was to-morrow."

For some time after this lesson, the ladies of Thebes were amazingly cautious in talking of strangers, and observed great decorum when prying into their concerns; and they became so careful of believing reports, that they even doubted the newspapers. They were particularly on their guard respecting Mr. and Mrs. Morrison, who, the following spring, removed to a villa they had purchased within a few miles of the city of New York. Still, it appeared that, with regard to the curiosity of their townswomen of Thebes, they had "scotched the

snake, not killed it"—for it revived again, in full vigour, early the ensuing summer, when the Wilson House was found to be occupied by five single gentlemen.

THE ALBUM.

'Tis not in mortals to command success.—*Addison.*

"UNGALLANT!—unmilitary!" exclaimed the beautiful Orinda Melbourne to her yet unprofessed lover, Lieutenant Sunderland, as in the decline of a summer afternoon, they sat near an open window in the north-west parlour of Mr. Cozzens's house at West Point, where as yet there was no hotel—"And do you steadily persist in refusing to write in my Album? Really, you deserve to be dismissed the service for unofficer-like conduct."

"I have forsworn Albums," replied Sunderland, "and for, at least, a dozen reasons. In the first place, the gods have not made me poetical."

"Ah!" interrupted Miss Melbourne, "you remind me of the well-known story of the mayor of a French provincial town, who informed the king

that the worthy burgesses had fifteen reasons for not doing themselves the honour of firing a salute on his majesty's arrival: the first reason being, that they had no cannon."

"A case in point," remarked Sunderland.

"Well," resumed Orinda, "I do not expect you to surpass the glories of Byron and Moore."

"Nothing is more contemptible than mediocre poetry," observed Sunderland; "the magazines and souvenirs have surfeited the world with it."

"I do not require you to be even mediocre," persisted the young lady. "Give me something ludicrously bad, and I shall prize it almost as highly as if it were seriously good. I need not remind you of the hacknied remarks, that extremes meet, and that there is but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous. Look at this Ode to West Point, written in my Album by a very obliging cadet, a room-mate of my brother's. It is a perfect gem. How I admire these lines,

> "'The steam-boat up the river shoots
> While Willis on his bugle toots.'"

"Wo to the man," said Sunderland, "who subjects his poetical reputation to the ordeal of a lady's Album, where all, whether gifted or ungifted, are expected to do their best."

"You are mistaken," replied Orinda; "that expectation has long since gone by. We have found, by experience, that, either from negligence or perverseness, gentlemen are very apt to write their worst in our Albums."

"I do not wonder at it," said Sunderland. "However, I must retrieve my character as a knight of chivalry. Appoint me any other task, and I will pledge myself to perform your bidding. Let your request 'take any shape but that, and my firm nerves shall never tremble.'"

"But why this inveterate horror of Albums?" asked Orinda. "Have you had any experience in them?"

"I have to my sorrow," replied Sunderland. "With me, I am convinced, 'the course of Albums never will run smooth.' For instance, I once, by means of an Album, lost the lady of my love, (I presume not to say the love of my lady.")

Orinda looked up and looked down, and "a change came o'er the spirit of her face:" which change was not unnoticed by her yet undeclared admirer, whose acquaintance with Miss Melbourne commenced on a former visit she had made to West Point to see her brother, who was one of the cadets of the Military Academy.

Orinda Melbourne was now in her twenty-first

year, at her own disposal, (having lost both her parents,) and mistress of considerable property, a great part of which had been left to her by an aunt. She resided in the city of New York, with Mr. and Mrs. Ledbury, two old and intimate friends of her family, and they had accompanied her to West Point. She was universally considered a very charming girl, and by none more so than by Lieutenant Sunderland. But hearing that Miss Melbourne had declined the addresses of several very unexceptionable gentlemen, our hero was trying to delay an explicit avowal of his sentiments, till he should discover some reason to hope that the disclosure would be favourably received.

Like most other men on similar occasions, he gave a favourable interpretation to the emotion involuntarily evinced by the young lady on hearing him allude to his former flame.

There was a pause of a few moments, till Orinda rallied, and said with affected carelessness—"You may as well tell me the whole story, as we seem to have nothing better to talk of."

"Well, then," proceeded Sunderland, "during one of my visits to the city, I met with a very pretty young lady from Brooklyn. Her name is of course unmentionable, but I soon found myself, for the first time in my life, a little in love"—

"I suspect it was not merely a little," remarked Orinda, with a penetrating glance—"It is said, that in love the first fit is always the strongest."

"No, no," exclaimed Sunderland; "I deny the truth of that opinion. It is a popular fallacy—I know it is"—fixing his eyes on Orinda.

At that minute the young officer would have given a year's pay to be certain whether the glow that heightened Miss Melbourne's complexion was a bona fide blush, or only the reflection of the declining sunbeams as they streamed from under a dark cloud that was hovering over the western hills. However, after a few moments consideration, he again interpreted favourably.

"Proceed, Mr. Sunderland," said Orinda in rather a tremulous voice; "tell me all the particulars."

"Of the Album I will," replied he. "Well then—this young lady was one of the belles of Brooklyn, and certainly very handsome."

"Of what colour were her eyes and hair?" inquired Orinda.

"Light—both very light."

Orinda, who was a brunette, caught herself on the point of saying that she had rarely seen much expression in the countenance of a blonde; but she checked the remark, and Sunderland proceeded.

"The lady in question had a splendidly bound Al-

bum, which she produced and talked about on all occasions, and seemed to regard with so much pride and admiration, that if a lover could possibly have been jealous of a book, I was, at times, very near becoming so. It was half filled with amatory verses by juvenile rhymesters, and with tasteless insipid drawings in water colours, by boarding school misses: which drawings my Dulcinea persisted in calling paintings. She also persisted in urging me to write "a piece of poetry" in her Album, and I persevered in declaring my utter inability: as my few attempts at versification had hitherto proved entire failures. At last, I reluctantly consented, recollecting to have heard of sudden fits of inspiration, and of miraculous gifts of poetical genius with which even milkmaids and cobblers have been unexpectedly visited. So taking the Album with me, I retired to the solitude of my apartment at the City Hotel, concluding with Macbeth that when a thing is to be well done, 'tis well to do it quickly. Here I manfully made my preparations "to saddle Pegasus and ride up Parnassus"—but in vain. With me the winged steed of Apollo was as obstinate as a Spanish mule on the Sierra Morena. Not an inch would he stir. There was not even the slightest flutter in his pinions; and the mountain of the muses looked to me as inaccessible as—as what shall I say"—

"I will help you to a simile," replied Orinda; "as inaccessible as the sublime and stupendous precipice to which you West Pointers have given the elegant and appropriate title of Butter Hill."

"Exactly," responded Sunderland. "Parnassus looked like Butter Hill. Well then—to be brief (as every man says when he suspects himself to be tedious), I sat up till one o'clock, vainly endeavouring to manufacture something that might stand for poetry. But I had no rhymes for my ideas, and no ideas for my rhymes. I found it impossible to make both go together. I at last determined to write my verses in prose till I had arranged the sense, and afterwards to put them into measure and rhyme. I tried every sort of measure from six feet to ten, and I essayed consecutive rhymes and alternate rhymes, but all was in vain. I found that I must either sacrifice the sense to the sound, or the sound to the sense. At length, I thought of the Bouts Rimées of the French. So I wrote down, near the right hand edge of my paper, a whole column of familiar rhymes, such as mine, thine, tears, fears, light, bright, &c. And now I congratulated myself on having accomplished one half of my task, supposing that I should find it comparatively easy to do the filling up. But all was to no purpose. I could effect nothing that I thought even tolerable, and I was

too proud to write badly and be laughed at. However, I must acknowledge that, could I have been certain that my 'piece of poetry' would be seen only by the fair damsel herself, I might easily have screwed my courage to the sticking place; for greatly as I was smitten with the beauty of my little nymph, I had a secret misgiving that she had never sacrificed to Minerva."

Our hero paused a moment to admire the radiance of the smile that now lighted up the countenance of Orinda.

"In short," continued he, "I sat up till 'night's candles were burnt out,' both literally and metaphorically, and I then retired in despair to my pillow, from whence I did not rise till ten o'clock in the morning.

"That evening I carried back the Album to my fair one; but she still refused to let me off, and insisted that I should take it with me to West Point, to which place I was to return next day. I did so, hoping to catch some inspiration from the mountain air, and the mountain scenery. I ought to have recollected that few of the poets on record, either lived among mountains, or wrote while visiting them. The sons of song are too often fated to set up their household gods, and strike their lyres in dark narrow streets and dismal alleys.

"As soon as the steamboat had cleared the city, I took out my pocket-book and pencil, and prepared for the onset. I now regarded the ever-beautiful scenery of the magnificent Hudson with a new interest. I thought the Palisades would do something for me; but my imagination remained as sterile and as impenetrable as their eternal rocks. The broad expanse of the Tappan sea lay like a resplendent mirror around me, but it reflected no image that I could transfer to my tablets. We came into the Highlands, but the old Thunder Barrack rumbled nothing in my fancy's ear, Anthony's Nose looked coldly down upon me, and the Sugar Loaf suggested no idea of sweetness. We proceeded along, but Buttermilk Falls reminded me not of the fountain of Helicon, and Bull Hill and Breakneck Hill seemed too rugged ever to be smoothed into verse.

"That afternoon I went up to Fort Putnam, for the hundred and twentieth time in my life. I walked round the dismantled ramparts; I looked into their damp and gloomy cells. I thought (as is the duty of every one that visits these martial ruins) on the 'pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war.' But they inspired nothing that I could turn to account in my lady's Album; nothing that could serve to introduce the compliment always expected in the last stanza. And, in truth, this compliment was the

chief stumbling-block after all. 'But for these vile compliments, I might myself have been an Album-poet.'"

"Is it then so difficult to compliment a lady?" inquired Orinda.

"Not in plain prose," replied Sunderland; "and when the lady is a little à l'imbecile, nothing in the world is more easy. But even in prose, to compliment a sensible woman as she deserves, and without danger of offending her modesty, requires both tact and talent."

"Which I suppose is the reason," said Orinda, "that sensible women obtain so few compliments from your sex, and fools so many."

"True," replied Sunderland. "But such compliments as we wish to offer to elegant and intellectual females, are as orient pearls compared to French beads."

Orinda cast down her beautiful eyes under the expressive glance of her admirer. She felt that she was now receiving a pearl.

"But to proceed," continued Sunderland, "I came down from the fort no better poet than I went up, and I had recourse again to the solitude of my own room. Grown desperate, and determined to get the Album off my mind and have it over, an idea struck me which I almost blush to mention. Pro-

mise not to look at me, and I will amaze you with my candour."

Orinda pretended to hold her fan before her eyes.

"Are you sure you are not peeping between the stems of the feathers," said Sunderland. "Well then, now for my confession; but listen to it 'more in sorrow than in anger,' and remember that the Album alone was the cause of my desperation and my dishonour. Some Mephistopheles whispered in my ear to look among the older poets for something but little known, and transfer it as mine to a page in the fatal book. I would not, of course, venture on Scott or Moore or Byron, for though I doubted whether my lady-love was better versed in *them* than in the bards of Queen Anne's reign, yet I thought that perhaps some of the readers of her Album might be acquainted with the last and best of the minstrels. But on looking over a volume of Pope, I found his 'Song by a Person of Quality.'"

"I recollect it," said Orinda; "it is a satire on the amateur love-verses of that period: such as were generally produced by fashionable inamoratoes. In these stanzas the author has purposely avoided every approach to sense or connexion, but has assembled together a medley of smooth and euphonous sounds. And could you risk such verses with your Dulcinea?"

"Yes," replied Sunderland, "with *her*, I knew that I was perfectly safe, and that she would pronounce them sweet and delightful. And in short, that they would exactly suit the calibre of her understanding."

"Yet still," said Orinda, "with such an opinion of her mental qualifications, you professed to love this young lady—or rather you really loved her—no doubt you did."

"No, no," replied Sunderland, eagerly. "It was only a passing whim—only a boyish fancy—such as a man may feel a dozen times, before he is five-and-twenty, and before he is seriously in love. I should have told you that at this period I had not yet arrived at years of discretion."

"I should have guessed it without your telling," said Orinda, mischievously.

The young officer smiled, and proceeded.

"I now saw my way clear. So I made a new pen, placed Pope on my desk, and sitting down to the Album with a lightened spirit, I began with the first stanza of his poem:

'Fluttering spread thy purple pinions
 Gentle Cupid o'er my heart,
I a slave in thy dominions,
 Nature must give way to art.'

And I then added the second and sixth verses, substituting the name of my fair one for that of Aurelia."

"What would I not give to know that name!" thought Orinda. "But, in those verses," she remarked to Sunderland, "if I recollect aright, there is no direct compliment to the lady's beauty."

"But there is a very great one by implication," answered the lieutenant. "For instance, the line—

'Hear me pay my dying vows.'—What more could I profess than to die for love of her! And a lady that is died for, must of course be superlatively charming. In short, I finished the verses, and I must say they were very handsomely transcribed. Now do not laugh. Is it not more excusable to take some pride in writing a good hand, than to boast of scribbling a bad one? I have known persons who seemed absolutely to plume themselves on the illegibility of their scrawls; because, unfortunately, so many men of genius have indulged in a most shameful style of chirography.

"Well, I viewed my performance with much satisfaction, and then proceeded to look attentively through the Album, (I had as yet but glanced over it,) to see if any one excelled me in calligraphy. What was my horror, when I found among a multitude of Lines to Zephyrs and Dew-drops and Stan-

zas to Rose-buds and Violets, the identical verses that I had just copied from Pope! Some other poor fellow, equally hard pressed, had been before-hand with me, and committed the very same theft: which, in his case, appeared to me enormous. I pronounced it 'flat burglary,' and could have consigned him to the Penitentiary 'for the whole term of his natural life.' To be compelled to commit a robbery is bad enough, but to be anticipated in the very same robbery, and to find that you have burdened your conscience, and jeopardized your self-respect for nothing, is worse still."

"There was one way," observed Orinda, "in which you could have extricated yourself from the dilemma. You might have cut out the leaf, and written something else on another."

"That was the very thing I finally determined on doing," replied Sunderland. "So after a pause of deep distress, I took my penknife, and did cut out the leaf: resolving that for my next 'writing piece,' I would go as far back as the poets of Elizabeth's time. While pleasing myself with the idea that all was now safe, I perceived, in moving the book, that another leaf was working its way out; and I found, to my great consternation, that I had cut too deeply, and that I had loosened a page on which was faintly drawn in a lady's hand, a faint

Cupid shooting at a faint heart, encircled with a wreath of faint flowers. I recollected that my 'fair one with locks of gold,' had pointed out to me this performance as 'the sweetest thing in her Album.'"

"By-the-bye," remarked Orinda, "when you found so much difficulty in composing verses, why did you not substitute a drawing?"

"Oh!" replied the lieutenant, "though I am at no loss in military drawing, and can finish my bastions, and counterscarps and ravelins with all due neatness, yet my miscellaneous sketches are very much in the style of scene-painting, and totally unfit to be classed with the smooth, delicate, half-tinted prettinesses that are peculiar to ladies' Albums."

"Now," said Orinda, "I am going to see how you will bear a compliment. I know that your drawings are bold and spirited, and such as the artists consider very excellent for an amateur, and therefore I will excuse you from writing verses in my Album, on condition that you make me a sketch, in your own way, of my favourite view of Fort Putnam—I mean that fine scene of the west side which bursts suddenly upon you when going thither by the back road that leads through the woods. How sublime is the effect, when you stand at the foot of the dark gray precipice, feathered as it is with masses of beautiful foliage, and when you look

up to its lofty summit, where the living rock seems to blend itself with the dilapidated ramparts of the mountain fortress!"

"To attempt such a sketch for Miss Melbourne," replied Sunderland, with much animation, "I shall consider both a pleasure and an honour. But Loves and Doves, and Roses and Posies, are entirely out of my line, or rather out of the line of my pencil. Now, where was I? I believe I was telling of my confusion when I found that I had inadvertently cut out the young lady's pet Cupid."

"But did it not strike you," said Orinda, "that the easiest course, after all, was to go to your demoiselle, and make a candid confession of the whole: which she would undoubtedly have regarded in no other light than as a subject of amusement, and have been too much diverted to feel any displeasure."

"Ah! you must not judge of every one by yourself," replied Sunderland. "I thought for a moment of doing what you now suggest, but after a little consideration, I more than suspected that my candour would be thrown away upon the perverse little damsel that owned the Album, and that any attempt to take a ludicrous view of the business would mortally offend her. All young ladies are not like Miss Orinda Melbourne"—(bowing as he spoke).

Orinda turned her head towards the window, and fixed her eyes intently on the top of the Crow's Nest. This time the suffusion on her cheeks was not in the least doubtful.

"Well, then," continued Sunderland, "that I might remedy the disaster as far as possible, I procured some fine paste, and was proceeding to cement the leaf to its predecessor, when, in my agitation, a drop of the paste fell on the Cupid's face. In trying to absorb it with the corner of a clean handkerchief, I 'spread the ruin widely round,' and smeared off his wings, which unfortunately grew out of the back of his neck: a very pardonable mistake, as the fair artist had probably never seen a live Cupid. I was now nearly frantic, and I enacted sundry ravings 'too tedious to mention.' The first use I made of my returning senses was to employ a distinguished artist (then on a visit to West Point) to execute on another leaf, another Cupid, with bow and arrow, heart and roses, &c. He made a beautiful little thing, a design of his own, which alone was worth a thousand Album drawings of the usual sort. I was now quite reconciled to the disaster which had given me an opportunity of presenting the young lady with a precious specimen of taste and genius. As soon as it was finished, I obtained leave of absence for a few days, went down to the city, and,

Album in hand, repaired to my Brooklyn beauty. I knew that, with her, there would be no use in telling the whole truth and nothing but the truth, and I acknowledge with shame that I suppressed the fact of my copying Pope's verses. I merely said, that not being quite satisfied with my poetry, I had cut out the leaf; and I then went on to relate the remainder exactly as it happened. As I proceeded, I observed her brows beginning to contract, and her lips beginning to pout. 'Well, sir,' said she, with her eyes flashing, (for I now found that even blue eyes could flash,) 'I think you have been taking great liberties with my Album: cutting and clipping it, and smearing it with paste, and spoiling my best Cupid, and then getting a man to put another picture into it, without asking my leave.'

"Much disconcerted, I made many apologies, all of which she received with a very ill grace. I ventured to point out to her the superiority of the drawing that had been made by the artist."

"'I see no beauty in it,' she exclaimed, 'the shading is not half so much blended as Miss Cottonwool's, and it does not look half so soft.'"

"I have observed," said Orinda, "that persons who in reality know but little of the art, always dwell greatly on what they call softness."

"I endeavoured to reconcile her to the drawing,"

continued Sunderland; "but she persisted in saying that it was nothing to compare to Miss Cottonwool's, which she alleged was of one delicate tint throughout, while this was very light in some places and very dark in others, and that she could actually see distinctly where most of the touches were put on, 'when in paintings that are really handsome,' said she, 'all the shading is blended together, and looks soft.'

"To conclude, she would not forgive me; and in sober truth, I must acknowledge that the petulance and silliness she evinced on this occasion, took away much of my desire to be restored to favour. Next day I met her walking on the Battery, in high flirtation with an old West Indian planter, who espoused her in the course of a fortnight, and carried her to Antigua."

Orinda now gave an involuntary and almost audible sigh; feeling a sensation of relief on hearing that her rival by anticipation, was married and gone, and entirely hors de combat.

Mr. and Mrs. Ledbury, who had been taking a long walk, now came in: and shortly after, the bell rang for tea. And when Orinda took the offered arm of Sunderland (as he conducted her to the table), she felt a presentiment, that before many

days, the important question would be asked and answered.

The evening on which our story commences, was that of the 3d of July, 1825, and tea was scarcely over at the Mess House, when an orderly serjeant came round with a notice for the officers to assemble in uniform at the dock, to receive General La Fayette, who was expected in half an hour.

The guest of the nation had visited the Military Academy soon after his arrival in America. He had there been introduced to Cadet Huger, the son of that gallant Carolinian, who, in conjunction with the generous and enterprising Bollman, had so nearly succeeded in the hazardous attempt of delivering him from the dungeons of Olmutz.

La Fayette was now on his return from his memorable tour throughout the United States. Major Worth, who was in command at West Point during the temporary absence of Colonel Thayer, happened to be at Newburgh when the steamboat arrived there, in which La Fayette was proceeding down the river from Albany to New York; and he invited the General to stop at West Point, and remain till the next boat. The invitation was promptly accepted, and Major Worth instantly despatched a messenger with the intelligence; wish-

ing to give the residents of the post an opportunity of making such preparations for the reception of their distinguished visiter, as the shortness of the time would allow.

The officers hastily put on their full dress uniform, and repaired to the wharf, or dock, as it is called. The band (at that time the finest in America) was already there. The ladies assembled on the high bank that overlooks the river, and from thence witnessed the arrival of La Fayette.

On the heights above the landing-place, and near the spot where the hotel has been since erected, appeared an officer, and a detachment of soldiers, waiting with lighted matches to commence the salute; for which purpose several pieces of artillery had been conveyed thither.

The twilight of a summer evening was accelerated by a vast and heavy cloud, portentous of a thunderstorm. It had overspread the west, and loured upon the river, on whose yet unruffled waters the giant shadows of the mountains were casting a still deeper gloom. Beyond Polipel's Island was seen the coming steamboat, looking like an immense star upon a level with the horizon. There was a solemn silence all around, which was soon broken by the sound of the paddles, that were heard when the boat was as far off as Washington's Valley: and in

a few minutes, her dense shower of sparks and her wreath of red smoke were vividly defined upon the darkening sky.

The boat was soon at the wharf: and at the moment that La Fayette stepped on shore, the officers took off their hats, the band struck up Hail Columbia, and, amid the twilight gloom and the darkness of the impending thunder-cloud, it was chiefly by the flashes of the guns from the heights, that the scene was distinctly visible. The lightning of heaven quivered also on the water; and the mountain echoes repeated the low rolling of the distant thunder, in unison with the loud roar of the cannon.

The general, accompanied by his son, and by his secretary Levasseur, walked slowly up the hill, leaning on the arm of Major Worth, preceded by the band playing La Fayette's March, and followed by the officers and professors of the Institution. When they had ascended to the plain, they found the houses lighted up, and the camp of the cadets illuminated also. They proceeded to the Mess House, and as soon as they had entered, the musicians ranged themselves under the elms in front, and commenced Yankee Doodle; the quick-step to which La Fayette at the head of his American division, had marched to the attack at the siege of Yorktown.

While the General was partaking of some refreshment, the officers and professors returned for the ladies, all of whom were desirous of an introduction to him. Many children were also brought and presented to the far-famed European, who had so importantly assisted in obtaining for them and for their fathers, the glorious immunities of independence.

Even now,* while one who was present at this scene is essaying to describe it, her reminiscences are broken by the intelligence that has recently reached our shores of the death of that truly great man, a few hours in whose history she is attempting to rescue from the waves of oblivion. The star has now set which shone so auspiciously for our country at that disastrous period of our revolutionary struggle—

> "When hope was sinking in dismay,
> And gloom obscured Columbia's day."

Mouldering into dust is that honoured hand which was clasped with such deep emotion by the assembled sons and daughters of the nation in whose cause it had first unsheathed the sword of liberty.

* This story was originally written in June, 1834, and commenced a few days before we heard of the death of La Fayette.

And soon will that noble and generous heart, so replete with truth and benevolence, be reduced to "a clod of the valley." Yet, may we not hope that from the world of eternity, of which his immortal spirit is now an inhabitant, he looks down with equal interest on the land of his nativity, and on the land of his adoption: that country so bound to him by ties of everlasting gratitude; that country where all were his friends, as he was the friend of all.

Tears suffused the beautiful eyes of Orinda Melbourne, when, introduced by her lover, she took the offered hand of La Fayette, and her voice trembled as she replied to the compliment of the patriot of both hemispheres. Sunderland remarked to the son of the illustrious veteran, that it gave him much pleasure to see that the General's long and fatiguing journey had by no means impaired his healthful appearance, but that, on the contrary, he now looked better than he had done on his first arrival in America. "Ah!" replied Colonel La Fayette, "how could my father suffer from fatigue, when every day was a day of happiness!"

After Orinda had resigned her place to another lady, she said to Sunderland, who stood at the back of her chair—"What would I not give for La Fayette's autograph in my Album!"

"Still harping on the Album," said Sunderland, smiling.

"Excuse me this once," replied Orinda. I begin to think as you do with respect to Albums, but if nothing else can be alleged in their favour, they may, at least, be safe and convenient depositories for mementoes of those whose names are their history. All I presume to wish or to hope from La Fayette, is simply his signature. But I have not courage myself to ask such a favour. Will you convey my request to him?"

"Willingly," answered Sunderland. "But he will grant that request still more readily if it comes from your own lips. Let us wait awhile, and I will see that you have an opportunity."

In a short time, nearly all the company had departed, except those that were inmates of the house. The gentlemen having taken home the ladies, returned for the purpose of remaining with La Fayette till the boat came along in which he was to proceed to the city.

Orinda took her Album; her admirer conducted her to the General, and with much confusion she proffered her request; Sunderland brought him a standish, and he wrote the name "La Fayette" in the centre of a blank page, which our heroine presented to him: it having on each side other blank

leaves that Orinda determined should never be filled up. Highly gratified at becoming the possessor of so valued a signature, she could scarcely refrain, in her enthusiasm, from pressing the leaf to her lips, when she soon after retired with Mrs. Ledbury.

The officers remained with General La Fayette till the arrival of the boat, which came not till near twelve o'clock. They then accompanied him to the wharf, and took their final leave. The thunder-storm had gone round without discharging its fury on West Point, and every thing had turned out propitiously for the General's visit; which was perhaps the more pleasant for having been so little expected.

The following day was the Fourth of July, and the next was the one fixed on by Mr. and Mrs. Ledbury for returning to New York. That morning, at the breakfast-table, the number of guests was increased by the presence of a Mr. Jenkins, who had come from the city in the same boat with Miss Melbourne and her friends, and after passing a few days at West Point, had gone up the river to visit some relations at Poughkeepsie, from whence he had just returned. Mr. Jenkins was a shallow, conceited, over-drest young man, and, morever, extremely ugly, though of this misfortune he was not

in the least aware. He was of a family whose wealth had not made them genteel. He professed great politeness to the ladies, that is, if they had beauty and money, yet he always declared that he would marry nothing under a hundred thousand dollars. But he was good-natured; and that, and his utter insignificance, got him along tolerably well, for no one ever thought it worth while to be offended at his folly and self-sufficiency.

After breakfast, Mrs. Ledbury asked Orinda if she had prevailed on Mr. Sunderland to write an article in her Album, adding—"I heard you urging him to that effect the other day, as I passed the front parlour."

"I found him inexorable, as to writing," replied Orinda.

"Well, really," said Mr. Jenkins, "I don't know how a gentleman can reconcile himself to refuse any thing a lady asks. And he an officer too! For my part, I always hold it my bounden duty to oblige the ladies, and never on any account to treat them with hauteur, as the French call it. To be sure, I am not a marrying man—that is, I do not marry under a hundred thousand—but still, that is no reason why I should not be always polite and agreeable. Apropos, as the French say—apropos,

Miss Melbourne, you know *I* offered the other day to write something for you in your Album, and I will do it with all the pleasure in life. I am very partial to Albums, and quite au-fait to them, to use a French term."

"We return to the city this afternoon," said Orinda. "You will scarcely have time to add any thing to the treasures of *my* Album.

"Oh! it won't take me long," replied Jenkins—"short and sweet is *my* motto. There will be quite time enough. You see I have already finished my breakfast. I am not the least of a gourmand, to borrow a word from the French."

Orinda had really some curiosity to see a specimen of Jenkins's poetry: supposing that, like the poor cadet's, it might be amusingly bad. Therefore, having sent for her Album, she put it hastily into Jenkins's hand: for at that moment Lieutenant Sunderland, who had, as usual, breakfasted at the mess-table with his brother officers, came in to invite her to walk with him to Gee's Point. Orinda assented, and immediately put on her bonnet, saying to her lover as she left the house—

"You know this is one of my favourite walks—I like that fine mass of bare granite running far out into the river, and the beautiful view from its ex

treme point. And then the road, by which we descend to it, is so charmingly picturesque, with its deep ravine on one side, filled with trees and flowering shrubs, and the dark and lofty cliff that towers up on the other, where the thick vine wanders in festoons, and the branches of the wild rose throw their long streamers down the rock, whose utmost heights are crowned with still-lingering remnants of the grass-grown ruins of Fort Clinton."

But we question if, on this eventful morning, the beauties of Gee's Point were duly appreciated by our heroine, for long before they had reached it, her lover had made an explicit avowal of his feelings and his hopes, and had obtained from her the promise of her hand: which promise was faithfully fulfilled on that day two months.

In the afternoon Lieutenant Sunderland accompanied Miss Melbourne and her friends on their return to the city. Previous to her departure, Orinda did not forget to remind Mr. Jenkins of her Album, now doubly valuable to her as containing the name of La Fayette, written by his own hand.

Jenkins begged a thousand pardons, alleging that the arrival of a friend from New York had prevented him from writing in it, as he had intended. "And of course," said he, "I could not put off my

friend, as he is one of the élite of the city, to describe him in French. However, there is time enough yet. Short and sweet you know"—

"The boat is in sight," said Sunderland.

"Oh! no matter," answered Jenkins. "I can do it in a minute, and I will send it down to the boat after you. Miss Melbourne shall have it before she quits the wharf. I would on no consideration be guilty of disappointing a lady."

And taking with him the Album, he went directly to his room.

"You had best go down to the dock," said the cadet, young Melbourne, who had come to see his sister off. "There is no time to be lost. I will take care that the Album reaches you in safety, should you be obliged to go without it."

They proceeded towards the river, but they had scarcely got as far as Mrs. Thomsons, when a waiter came running after them with the book, saying —"Mr. Jenkins's compliments to Miss Melbourne, and all is right."

"Really," said Sunderland, "that silly fellow must have a machine for making verses, to have turned out any thing like poetry in so short a time."

They were scarcely seated on the deck of the

steamboat, when Orinda opened her Album to look for the inspirations of Jenkins's Muse. She found no verses. But on the very page consecrated by the hand of La Fayette, and immediately under the autograph of the hero, was written, in an awkward school-boy character, the name of Jeremiah Jenkins.

THE READING PARTIES.

WRITTEN ORIGINALLY FOR "THE TOKEN," 1835.

> Black spirits and white,
> Blue spirits and gray;
> Mingle, mingle, mingle,
> You that mingle may.
>
> *Shakspeare.*

Mr. Milstead, a clergyman, who to the most sincere piety united a cultivated mind, a benevolent heart, and a cheerful and liberal disposition, had been recently appointed to a church in one of the small towns of a certain Atlantic section of the Union, that shall be nameless. His wife was a young and beautiful woman, whose character harmonized in every respect with his own. They had no children; they were good managers, and Mr. Milstead soon found that his salary would not only afford them all they wanted, but that it would leave them something to give away. They became very

popular with the congregation; for Mr. Milstead, though indefatigable in administering to the spiritual wants of his flock, was never unmindful of their temporal happiness, and his judicious and amiable wife went hand in hand with him in every thing.

They had not been long established in Tamerton, when Mr. and Mrs. Milstead observed with regret, that though the inhabitants showed the best possible disposition to be on intimate terms with the minister and his lady, there was little sociability or familiarity among themselves. The society of Tamerton had gradually divided into numerous circles; some of these circles being so small as to comprise but one or two families. For instance, Mrs. Gutheridge, the most wealthy woman of the place, revolved entirely in her own orbit. She was the childless widow of Zephaniah Pelatiah Gutheridge, who had for several successive sessions filled the office of speaker, in the senate of the state legislature: an office that suited him exactly, as he had never been known to speak *in* the house, and very rarely out of it.

Mr. Gutheridge had long been the chief man of Tamerton, and his widow now reigned in his stead: alone in her glory, and occupant of the broadest, the longest, and the tallest white frame domicile in the village. She was originally from the city, and

of a very genteel family: her grandfather having made his fortune, quitted bricklaying, and turned gentleman long before he was superannuated. Her father had not contaminated his hands by putting them to any trade whatever: having, after he left college, attended to no other business than the care of preserving his life by studying to guard himself from all possible maladies and accidents. Therefore he died of no particular disease, at the age of thirty-four.

Mrs. Gutheridge was a large woman, with a majestic figure. She had an aquiline nose, immense black eyes, and a prominent mouth, with very good teeth. After she became a widow, she preferred remaining at Tamerton to removing to the city: for, like Cæsar, she thought it better to be first in a village than second at Rome. She had, however, a sovereign contempt for every man, woman and child in the neighbourhood, with the exception of the clergyman and his wife, whom she tolerated, because she had heard that, in England, the aristocracy make a point of upholding the church, and she professed to be aristocratic in all her ways.

With the assistance of her maid, she spent an hour every day in attiring herself for her solitary dinner, and she sat down alone to her sumptuous table, "all drest up in rich array." This she call-

ed self-respect. Her abigail reported that Mrs. Gutheridge had a set of night curls for sleeping in; and that her nightcaps were far superior to any day-caps that had ever appeared in Tamerton.

She rarely walked beyond her own grounds, but she rode out in her carriage every afternoon. She was seldom seen at full length, except on Sunday morning, when she proceeded up the middle aisle of the church, swinging a magnificent reticule, and followed by her black man, carrying two magnificent books. Her pew was richly lined and carpeted, and it was surrounded by curtains through which she could peep, without being exposed to the gaze of the vulgar; for of that class she considered the whole congregation. She reminded Mr. Milstead of the sovereign of one of the Asiatic Islands, who always kept his own name a profound secret, lest it should be profaned by the utterance of his subjects.

Mrs. Gutheridge, being unquestionably at the head (or rather over the head) of Tamerton society, the next position was occupied by the families of two lawyers, and the third circle consisted of three physicians: for except in Philadelphia, lawyers are generally supposed to rank doctors: but in the city of brotherly love, that point is still contested. With regard to the medical fraternity of Tamerton, it might be said in the words of Shelty, that "every

man shook his own hand," for they never met in amity, and were seldom on speaking terms. Dr. Drainblood referred every disease to the head: Dr. Famishem deduced "all the ills that flesh is heir to,' from the state of the stomach: and Dr. Juste Milieu (who was a Frenchman), maintained a strict neutrality: keeping half way between the two theories, doing neither good nor harm to his patients, and incurring the contempt and reprobation of both his fellow practitioners. He was, however, in high favour with the young ladies and the mothers; the grandmothers did not like him quite so well.

In the fourth circle were the store-keepers: and they found it convenient to be tolerably friendly. Next came the tavern-keepers, who were rivals and foe-men. The mechanics all took precedence of each other: there being no reason why a carpenter should vail his bonnet to a wheelright, why a shoemaker should do reverence to a tailor, or why a butcher should succumb to a baker. As to the clerks, milliners and mantua-makers, they got in where they could. The teachers got in no where: except one lady, who, under the signature of Polyhymnia, supplied the weekly newspaper with odes, "after the manner of Pindar," (not Peter,) and was therefore generally invited to meet stran-

gers, and to show them that the town of Tamerton possessed a live author.

Let it, however, be understood that the integrity of the circles was chiefly preserved by the ladies. The gentlemen, when their wives were not by, frequently gave way to their natural dislike of restraint, and talked to each other familiarly enough, particularly on politics: for when that subject is started, no American can possibly keep silent.

Such was the state of society in the village of Tamerton, when Mr. and Mrs. Milstead first removed thither. They soon discovered the position of affairs by visiting round among the congregation; and when the pastor and his lady invited company to their own house, they always perceived that they had given some dissatisfaction by not assorting the guests according to rank.

Mrs. Gutheridge kept herself entirely *hors de combat*, and showed no other civility to Mr. and Mrs. Milstead, than that of coming in her carriage to leave at their door two cards printed in gold.

Mr. Milstead took occasion in one of his sermons to deprecate the sin of pride and arrogance, which he justly represented as being especially absurd and inconvenient in a small community, every member of which was a citizen of a republic. His

discourse was eloquent and impressive, and it was heard with due attention. Yet the only effect it produced was, that none of the congregation took his admonitions to themselves, but all hoped that their neighbours would.

However, Mr. Milstead gained in popularity, and he came to the conclusion that it was best to spare any further exhortation, and to endeavour by some indirect means to win the people of Tamerton into habits of more sociability. Though a few individuals made some pretensions to literary taste, Mr. Milstead had observed in the majority of his congregation, a lamentable want of interest in every thing connected with that subject. He now thought of attempting the establishment of periodical reading parties, with the double view of alluring the members into a relish for book knowledge and book amusement, and of bringing the families together at least once a week, so that the points on which they founded their foolish notions of reserve and exclusiveness, might be insensibly worn away by frequent collision.

Mrs. Milstead heartily concurred in the plan, and her husband drew up proposals for the reading parties, in which it was suggested that one should take place every Wednesday, commencing at the house of the pastor: the hour of assembling to be seven

in the evening. The parties were, of course, to be held by housekeepers only, with the privilege of inviting whom they pleased. It was very properly intimated that these meetings should be attended with no more trouble and expense than was sufficient to insure the comfort of the guests; that the refreshments should be of the simplest description, and that the costume of the ladies should be the same that they would wear if spending the evening with only their own families.

Mr. Milstead went round to all the respectable houses in the town, and presented his paper of proposals for the reading parties. He would have thought it scarcely worth while to apply to Mrs. Gutheridge, but he had understood that she sometimes did extraordinary things, when her rigid system of non-intercourse pressed so hard upon her own comfort, that human nature (even such as hers) could endure it no longer.

When Mr. Milstead was ushered into the presence, he found Mrs. Gutheridge spread out in a large fauteuil, with her feet on a great square cushion. Over the mantle-piece was an immense mirror, so fixed that as she sat before the fire she could survey herself from head to foot; and this was her usual occupation. Her morning dress was as elegant as a close gown and cap could possibly be.

Beside her stood a table with a splendid work-basket, a splendid writing case, and a splendid book; all which articles held their places as sinecures.

She received Mr. Milstead as graciously as her natural haughtiness would allow, and surprised him by promising to attend the first reading party, as it was to be at his house. Further she said not: neither did she vouchsafe to imply that the meeting should ever be held at *her* mansion.

Mr. Milstead then went round to the members of the congregation whom he knew to have "the appliances and means" of receiving company. He explained the purport of his project with so much good sense and good humour, that he found no great difficulty in enlisting as many as he wished. It is true that there was considerable curiosity to know to whom he had already applied, and who were the persons that had agreed to join the reading society; but Mr. Milstead had tact enough, and influence enough, to overrule all objections.

On the following Wednesday evening, Mrs. Milstead's largest room was ready for the accommodation of her guests. A table with a reading-lamp was placed in the centre of the floor. On it lay several books by the best modern authors, and a few numbers of the latest periodicals.

The company assembled within a quarter past

seven. Dr. Drainblood and Dr. Famishem had both excused themselves: it being impossible for them to sit down together in the same room. Dr Juste Milieu had promised to attend "with all proper felicity," and he kept his word.

As soon as the female part of the guests were disengaged from their cloaks, hoods, and India-rubber shoes, and had taken their seats, it was proposed that the business of the evening should commence: but Mrs. Milstead suggested the propriety of waiting for the arrival of Mrs. Gutheridge. Upon this, the ladies with one accord broke out into loud invectives against Mrs. Gutheridge "and all her airs." Preposterous and incredible anecdotes were related of her pride and her insolence, and a general conspiracy was organized for the purpose of treating her "as if she were no better than themselves," and letting her know "that they considered her company no honour."

The confusion of tongues was suddenly interrupted by the stopping of a carriage at the gate, and the sound of steps letting down. The ladies, who in the excitement of discussing Mrs. Gutheridge had all left their seats, now scrambled back to them; and the great woman of the village made her appearance, like queen Anne, in jewels and black velvet.

Mr. and Mrs. Milstead advanced to meet her: but she stopped short, and looked amazed that the fauteuil had not been left vacant for her. It was occupied by Mrs. Parley Utley, a lady that made a particular point of being always designated by her husband's christian name, to distinguish her from her sister-in-law, Mrs. John Utley, who lived at Mobile.

Mrs. Parley Utley was the shortest, the thinnest, the dowdiest, and the most insignificant looking of all the ladies of Tamerton, and on this evening she appeared but little better than usual. Her hair had been scratched up under a cap that had neither shape nor feature: her gown was of the worst possible fit, (the belt had slipped several inches below the waist:) and her muslin collar was yellow, rumpled, and pinned awry. She often acknowledged herself to be negligent in her dress, but still she believed that, somehow, she always looked well. Perhaps she went on the principle of that unfortunate line of Thomson's, that "beauty when unadorned is adorned the most:" for she pretended to some reading, and called herself a bit of a *blue bass*. Never did a woman enjoy more of the happiness of self-satisfaction: for though she had a sort of vague consciousness of her deficiencies, and suspected that she was without one decided qualification that was either

useful or ornamental, she still believed that, after all, there was something very agreeable about her, and that it was impossible for people not to like her. The man that had married this woman, was really in all other transactions a very sensible and judicious sort of person, but somehow, he had, since the first year, been much addicted to long journeys, and long absences from home.

Mrs. Parley Utley, having rallied from the confusion into which the arrival of Mrs. Gutheridge had thrown her, sat conspicuously rocking herself in the arm-chair, and whispering to her friend, Miss Fixby, "Who 's afraid? Who cares for her?"

Mr. Milstead having conducted Mrs. Gutheridge to a seat on the opposite side of the fire, there were a few moments of uncomfortable silence, which was interrupted by Mrs. Parley Utley speaking out to her in a pert, quick voice: "How do you do, Mrs. Gutheridge; I suppose you found the walking very bad, this evening, as the snow is beginning to thaw."

Mrs. Gutheridge turned her large black eyes full upon her, and gave the little woman a demolishing look. Then addressing her reply to Mr. Milstead, she uttered in her usual deep, slow tone, that was always meant to be very impressive, "I never walk of an evening, and rarely in the day time; I have too much self-respect."

"Don't you find your front parlour very cold?" continued Mrs. Utley; "facing the north, as I believe it is."

Mrs. Gutheridge again turned to Mr. Milstead: "There is no reason why I should allow either of my parlours to be cold; I should be wanting to myself if I did."

"I think I did not see you at church last Sunday;" pursued Mrs. Utley; "had you a cold?"

"Are you talking to me, madam?" replied Mrs. Gutheridge, fixing on her a look still more appalling than the last. Mrs. Parley Utley shrunk back into her shell, ceased rocking, and having brought her knitting, she sought refuge among the ladies that surrounded a work table, in another part of the room.

With the exception of Mrs. Milstead, none of the female part of the company made any farther attempt on Mrs. Gutheridge. She was too rude and too repelling even to be flattered or fawned upon. Still, though they "felt the iron enter their souls," all were glad to suffer under her, that they might afterwards boast of the honour of "having met Mrs. Gutheridge in company."

There was one person, however, who came to the reading party with a determination that no rebuff on her side, should check his attention to the

wealthy widow, whom, as yet, he had seen only at a distance. This was Mr. Timmings, first and last teller in the bank of Tamerton: a little, thin, light-complexioned, small-featured old bachelor, verging on fifty-five, very spruce in his dress, and very much of a lady's man. He was supposed to be looking out for a rich wife, a blessing which he had no doubt his numerous attractions would eventually procure him. He had in the course of his life been in business in most of the chief cities of the Atlantic states, and had performed four bankruptcies: beginning at Boston, and proceeding down regularly along the seaboard, till he had failed successively in New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore. Happy to find that he had met Mrs. Gutheridge face to face, and yet lived, Mr. Timmings was emboldened to locate himself permanently in the vicinity of her chair, and occasionally to address her with a few complimentary words. It is true that she deigned no reply: but she did not otherwise insult him, and that was something.

Mr. Milstead now prepared to open the session, and for that purpose placed himself at the reading table, and took up a book; when Mr. Timmings stopped him hastily by saying: "Mr. Milstead—sir—perhaps sir—in all probability there is something that Mrs. Gutheridge would particularly prefer.

Pray madam—may I presume—would you have the goodness to mention what piece you would especially recommend. Mr. Milstead, of course you will be guided by Mrs. Gutheridge's taste."

Mr. Milstead half closed the volume: for after this appeal he could do no less than wait for the mandate of the lady. Mrs. Gutheridge paused a moment, but as she really knew nothing of books, she prudently and haughtily replied, addressing herself to Mr. Milstead: "Go on, sir. It is, of course, a matter of perfect indifference to me. I should be wanting to myself if I took any interest in these things."

Mr. Milstead coloured, and the cheeks of his wife were suffused in sympathy; however, he recovered in a moment, and again opened the book, which was the Western Souvenir: a little work highly creditable to the tase and genius of our brethren beyond the mountains. He selected Judge Hall's simple and thrilling tale of the Indian Hater, and read it with so much effect as completely to enchain the attention of most of his auditors; only, that in the fine passage where the backwoodsman describes with such agonized feeling the destruction of his whole family, Mrs. Neckgusset in a loud whisper asked Mrs. Hemmings across the work-table for the

loan of a spool No. 42, and Mrs. Scratchgather lamented audibly the present scarcity of three thread-ed sewing cotton.

Mrs. Milstead read next, and she chose Irving's beautiful and affecting story of the Widow and her Son, which drew tears from the eyes of many of the audience. To be sure, Mrs. Milstead had to stop short in the heart-rendering description of the burial of the poor young sailor, and to wait till a commotion at the work-table had subsided; Mrs. Puckerseam having dropped her thimble, and her companions all rising at her request, and moving back their chairs to give her an immediate opportunity of seeking it on the carpet. However, the thimble was recovered, and order restored: the tale was concluded, and those who were capable of feeling it as they ought, were somewhat annoyed at the pert voice of Mr. Timmings, saying, "Quite pathetic!" and at Mrs. Parley Utley foolishly observing, "I declare we shall all be solemnized."

"I vote," said Mr. Timmings, "that we now have something lively; something to brighten the eyes and bring out the smiles of the ladies, unless indeed, Mrs. Gutheridge prefers pieces of a serious cast."

"Pray madam," said Mrs. Utley, once more venturing on Mrs. Gutheridge, "which do you like best

of the two muses we used to read of in Scotch Lessons,* the one that was ever musing melancholy, or she that was full of quips and cranks?† Now I must say that for myself I am rather for quips and cranks: especially at reading parties."

Mrs. Gutheridge turned on her an awful look, folded her arms, leaned back in her chair, and fixed her eyes on the ceiling. Mrs. Parley Utley bent her diminished head over her knitting.

Mr. Chetwin, the schoolmaster, a sensible man and an excellent reader, was sitting near her: and pitying her confusion, he said gaily: "Well, Mrs. Utley, I will give you something that I think you will find diverting." And with much spirit and humour he read Paulding's admirable account of the night in the steamboat, when he was so much incommoded by the presence of an inveterate snorer.

A moment before Mr. Chetwin began, Dr. Juste Milieu made his appearance, having been detained during the early part of the evening by visiting a far-off patient. He took his seat between the reading-table and Mrs. Gutheridge, and was much struck by the immovable gravity of her countenance. At the first laugh, he could not forbear saying to her in his imperfect English: "You keep your serious!"

* Scott's Lessons on Elocution.

† See Milton's Il Penseroso and L'Allegro.

regarding her with a look of unfeigned surprise. Mr. Chetwin read on, and another peal of laughter again directed the French doctor's attention towards Mrs. Gutheridge, and still he saw the same determined rigidity of muscle. "You keep your serious still," he exclaimed in amazement, and then murmured to himself. "C'est inconcévable!"

The piece concluded amid audible demonstrations of risibility, and the astonished Frenchman, turning to Mr. Timmings, ejaculated: "En effect c'est trop, she keeps her serious all through! I protest, avec solemnité, that she is the most hard-faced lady I ever had the honour to meet with in my life."

Mrs. Gutheridge fixed on the French doctor one of her looks of annihilation, but he now only regarded her as an object of professional study, and as such, he gazed on her face with a curiosity that nothing could repel.

Mrs. Gutheridge slowly arose, and pompously advancing towards Mr. and Mrs. Milstead, she coldly took leave of them. "It is yet quite early, madam," said Mrs. Milstead, in some surprise. "Will you not wait till your carriage can be sent for?" asked Mr. Milstead. "I shall be too happy to run up to your house, and have it brought for you," volunteered Mr. Timmings; "I beg you will honour me by commanding my services in every thing." "I want

them not," replied Mrs. Gutheridge; "wherever I go, I always keep my carriage waiting, that I may depart whenever I please; I suppose it is still at the door."

She stopped a moment in the hall to put on her cloak: Mr. Milstead attended her to the gate, and Mr. Timmings ran beside her. When assisting her to the carriage, he touched her arm with his hand, which she shook off; and then turning to Mr. Milstead (who said something implying his fear that she had not found the reading party agreeable), she replied: "No sir; after that person was permitted to read aloud, in the presence of a lady, a ridiculous story about a man snoring in a steamboat, I should have been wanting to myself had I stayed. Much that was offensive to me has taken place this evening. For yourself and Mrs. Milstead, I know not that I can accuse you of any improper intentions. But, as it is, I cannot consistently with the respect that is due to myself, again run the risk of coming in contact with the people that seem likely to frequent these reading parties."

After this tirade, which was delivered with one foot on the step of the carriage, she took her seat, coldly bowed to Mr. Milstead, and ordered her servant to shut the door.

"Mr. Milstead," said Timmings, as they returned

to the house, "this is really very unfortunate—quite a contra-temps; positively a most lamentable circumstance."

"Not at all;" replied Mr. Milstead.

"Yes sir, it is;" reiterated Timmings, warmly. "To seriously offend Mrs. Gutheridge, is not a thing of so little consequence as you seem to suppose. Now to affront Parley Utley's wife, I own, would be nothing, and could not deserve a second thought. But the widow Gutheridge of Eaglebury Hall. Really, Mr. Milstead, I am surprised at you."

"For what?" asked Mr. Milstead, smiling.

"For permitting, in your house, the reading of a piece that was likely to shock the refinement of such a lady as Mrs. Gutheridge."

"Pho!" returned Mr. Milstead, "I never supposed that she had any refinement. Her pride and insolence afford no evidence of it. But after all, the story is an excellent one, and no woman, with even a moderate degree of intellect, could possibly take exception to it. However, I am expressing myself with too much warmth. In alluding to Mrs. Gutheridge, I should rather say, 'Alas! poor human nature!' for most sincerely do I consider her an object of compassion."

When the two gentlemen returned to the parlour, they heard the tongues of all the ladies going at

once, and found the whole female part of the company standing round the fire, and talking of Mrs. Gutheridge in no very gentle terms: and Mr. Timmings could not even gain one assent to his assertion, that "it was merely her manner, and that she was certainly a splendid woman."

Refreshments were now handed round, and Mrs. Buttercrumb, who was something of a gourmand, wondered that Mrs. Gutheridge had not stayed for them.

"Oh! you need not suppose that she would have condescended to taste them, even if she had stayed," remarked Mrs. Parley Utley. "Proud people always behave as if they thought nothing fit to eat in any house but their own."

After the little repast was over, Miss Ackworth, the village schoolmistress, read Mrs. Sigourney's beautiful little poem of Henry the First of England, and read it extremely well; and then a young gentleman named Edwards amused his hearers with Francis Hopkinson's jeu d'esprit, entitled Washing-day: a subject which came home to the feelings of every man in the room.

Mrs. Crampton then informed the company that her daughter would read. This daughter was a pale, thin, angular looking girl of fourteen, whom Mrs. Crampton had requested permission to bring with her. The young lady had just returned from

the city, whither she had been sent to complete her education at Miss Harrowbrain's seminary: a large and fashionable establishment, where every thing was forced at once on the tender minds of the pupils, who were all day going from *ology* to *ology*, and all the evening trying to load their memories with the *words* (not ideas) that they were to repeat the next morning.

Mrs. Crampton having whispered around the room that Mary Ann had obtained, successively, two premiums for history, Mr. Milstead inquired of the young lady what she would like to read. She replied, that "she would read Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, that being the book she was most accustomed to at Miss Harrowbrain's." Mr. Milstead brought the first volume from his library, and laid it before Miss Mary Ann, expecting that she had in view some particular passage. But the capability of selecting was not to be found in the over-worked and deadened mind of the poor girl, and her benumbed understanding was now incapable of the slightest original effort. So she regularly began at the first chapter, and regularly read on till she had set one half of her audience to nodding, and Mrs. Parley Utley to sleeping outright. This truly "dull lecture" continued till the well-watched hands of the clock pointed to the hour

of retiring: and then all the company made a simultaneous movement indicative of departure; Mrs. Utley awaking and rubbing her eyes, and assuring Miss Mary Ann that she could have listened all night to her delightful reading.

Before the company broke up. Mrs. Parley Utley invited them all to meet at her house on the following Wednesday, by which time she promised them that her husband (who was, as usual, absent on business,) would certainly be at home.

Accordingly, on the next Wednesday evening, the reading party assembled at Mrs. Utley's. Mr. Parley Utley had not yet returned: his wife declaring, in the simplicity of her folly, that she was not at all disappointed, as whenever he went from home he always enjoyed himself so much that he never knew when to get back again. This no one could possibly doubt who was acquainted with Mrs. Utley as a wife, mother and housekeeper. In the latter capacity she was especially deficient: for though she spent, or rather wasted, more money than any woman in the village, yet such was her indolence and mismanagement that every thing in her establishment betokened discomfort. Like all bad housewives, she always had bad servants, and frequently no servants at all. As a set-off to these manifold failings, she possessed the redeeming qualities of a

smiling manner, a good temper, and a disposition to make herself agreeable, (as far as she knew how,) to every body that treated her with civility.

On the appointed evening, she received her company with a very pleasant countenance, apologizing for the badness of the fire, which had not been replenished in due season; and for the disorder of the room, her children having, as she said, turned every thing topsy turvy. Her children were eight in number, and all were present except the baby, and one that was almost a baby: the six elder ones having been promised by their mother that they should sit up to the party. They were all palpably dirty and dowdy, therefore Mrs. Utley need not have taken the trouble to inform the company that "somehow, her children were never fit to be seen." Several of them, on the entrance of Mr. and Mrs. Milstead, who were the first arrivals, called out: "Ma, has the party begun now?"

We need not specify that the children were very troublesome and extremely inconvenient all the evening.

Mrs. Utley, in her good-nature, had invited a large proportion of honorary members, and many of them were persons whom Mr. Milstead was surprised to meet at any thing denominated a reading party.

"I suppose," said one of the ladies, "we are not

to expect the honour of Mrs. Gutheridge's company this evening."

"Oh! no, certainly not!" was the general exclamation.

"I had the pleasure of seeing the lady this morning," said Mr. Timmings. "I met her walking."

"Wonderful!" cried Mrs. Utley; "her horses must be lame. But after all, I dare say she sometimes does walk."

"I had the honour," pursued Mr. Timmings, conceitedly, "of calling off a dog that ran out from a gate, and barked at her."

"Really," asked Mr. Edwards, "and what did she say in return for your civility?"

"Oh! nothing," replied Timmings, looking foolish, "she merely said, 'Let the dog alone.'"

Mrs. Parley Utley then proposed commencing the duties of the evening, and took her seat at the reading-table. She selected from a magazine a weak, insipid, unmeaning tale, called "The Unheard Of," a fair specimen of the thousand and one stories of Italy, that are scattered through the periodicals, and are descriptive of murderous noblemen, sentimental cottagers, diabolical monks, and graceful robbers. Though the time of the narrative was in the thirteenth century, and the scene in Calabria Ulterior, the author had prudently avoided

giving names at full length, the monk being incog. all through, and not discovered even at the denouement; and the other characters were designated as Il Marchese F——, Il Contessa D——, Giulietta M——, Giovanni D——, &c.

While Mrs. Utley was favouring the company with this story, her son Johnny swung on the back of her chair, trying to overset her: and her youngest girl rolled on the floor at her feet, pulling off and on her mother's shoes.

The room was lighted with candles, as Mrs. Utley said that her lamps were out of order, as usual: and one of the amusements of her boy Billy was to snuff the candles incessantly and scatter the snuff all about. The other children dispersed themselves among the company, performing various feats of annoyance.

Mr. Milstead read, in his usual excellent manner, Cooper's admirable description of the wreck of the Ariel. Miss Ackworth, the poetical schoolmistress, was then invited to read by Mrs. Utley, who thought it very witty to address her as Miss Polly Himmany. Miss Ackworth read with much taste and feeling Miss Mitford's exquisite little poem of the Young Novice, Bridget Plantaganet.

She was followed by Mr. Barkaway, who volunteered to read, notwithstanding that, as he said, "he

was labouring under a severe cough." His selection was Alexander's Feast, which he got through with much difficulty: his cough being particularly loud and troublesome at the line, "Softly sweet in Lydian measure." And when he described Darius as "Fall'n, fall'n, fall'n from his high estate," Billy Utley added greatly to the effect, by knocking one of the candles off the table as he snuffed out the other.

The next readers were Mr. Snitterby and Mr. Sniffin, two friends that always hunted in couples. Mr. Snitterby had a cold in his head; so had Mr. Sniffin. Nevertheless, they persisted in reading together in dialogue, the prison scene between Alonzo and Rolla. Luckily it was short.

They were followed by Mr. Ugford, an immensely large man, tall and stout, with a black shock head, black beetling eyebrows, and tremendous black whiskers. He had brought a volume of his favourite Wordsworth, that he might gratify the company with the Pet Lamb, and he began in a Stentorian tone:

> The dew was falling fast, the stars began to blink,
> I heard a voice, it said, "Drink, pretty creature, drink."

After him came little Mr. Timmings, who, with his small, mild features, and sharp, weak tones,

chose the Battle of Hohenlinden; and as he rose into a squeak at the lines,

> Then shook the hills with thunder riven,
> Then rushed the steed to battle driven,
> And louder than the bolts of heaven,
> Far flashed the red artillery,

Billy's apron caught fire, and there was a general disturbance in extinguishing it.

Mrs. Parley Utley then said that she believed the best way to keep the children quiet, was to have the refreshments brought in. In fact, they had been loudly teazing during the last hour, to know when the almonds and raisins were coming. The mother then distributed handfuls to the children, before the waiters were carried round to the company, saying to the other mothers, "Poor dears; any thing to keep them quiet, you know." The almonds and raisins now afforded occupation to the children, till they all became so tired and sleepy that they could keep up no longer. Not that they were taken to bed, but they "addressed themselves to repose" under the table, on the sofa, or wherever they could.

Peace being restored, the reading went on.

There was among the guests this evening, Mr. Binnage, a farmer, whose domain was at the other end of Tamerton. He had stayed away from the

first reading party, in consequence of his new suit not having come from the tailor's: wishing, as he said, to make a respectable appearance, and not disgrace himself or the company. He was now in full costume; clean shaved, and his hair combed smooth. He kept his right hand continually fumbling in his coat pocket, particularly whenever a piece was concluded: at which time, also, he drew his chair nearer to the table. His comment upon every successive article was always something in this way:

"Well, now—I must say that 's very good. It is not every body that knows how to read out loud. To be sure I never had much booktionary knowledge, but still I know what good reading is. And there are some people that can read as well as others, even if they are not quite up to all sorts of bells letters."

This was repeated so often, that it attracted the attention of Mr. Milstead. Observing that the farmer had half drawn a book from the deep recess of his pocket, and was keeping his thumb in it, Mr. Milstead said to him in a low voice, "Perhaps, Mr. Binnage, *you* wish to read?"

"To be sure I do," replied the farmer; "what else did I come here for?"

"Mr. Edwards is the next reader," said Mr. Mil-

stead; "he is just about to commence. When he has finished, we shall be happy to hear you."

Mr. Edwards, who read admirably, began Bryant's spirited and beautiful little poem called "The Song of Marion's Men." The farmer started at the first line, turned very red, sat uneasily on his chair, took his book quite out of his pocket, opened it, shut it, and seemed extremely uncomfortable. He could scarcely restrain himself till Mr. Edwards had concluded his reading, and he then broke out: "Well, sir, I must say you have not treated me like a gentleman."

"How, sir?" inquired Mr. Edwards, much surprised. "Why, sir," replied the farmer, "what right had you to cheat me out of my poem? That's the very thing I had set my mind upon reading myself. I cut it out of a newspaper when it was going the rounds, and liked it above all things, because my father was one of Marion's men. Many a winter's evening have I sat upon the bench in the chimney-corner and heard him tell all about brave old Frank—and I was very glad when I found there were verses written concerning him—and such verses as these are enough to make soldiers of every body. I don't pretend to be a booktionary man, but I have sense enough to know good verses when I see them. So, as soon as I heard that they were printed in Bry-

ant's Poems, I bought the book without objecting to the price. And I brought it here to read out of, because I thought it would not look well to read out of a scrap of newspaper. There I have been studying this poem this two weeks, of evenings and all my spare time, and marking what words should be read high and what words low, and what fast and what slow. And I have been taking my wife's advice upon it; for she is a very good scholar. So I had got it all exactly right, and my wife (who could not come out to-night because of a fresh rheumatism,) is quite disappointed at not being here to hear me; for she says I can now read it equal to any play-actor; and I intended to give the whole company a surprise. So now another man's read my poem instead of me, and I have lost my chance."

Mr. Edwards, on hearing this explanation from the honest farmer, was seriously sorry that he had unconsciously anticipated him: and apologized on the plea of his entire ignorance of Mr. Binnage's intention, expressing his regret at not having been apprized of it as soon as he began to read. "Why, sir," said the farmer, warmly. "do you take me for a mere bushwacker? do you suppose I had no more manners than to interrupt a gentleman in his reading?"

"Is there nothing else that you would like to read?" asked Mr. Milstead, kindly.

"No, sir—nothing;" replied the mortified farmer. "I am not like you, that can read off a thing at once, whether you are used to it or no. And, indeed, this "Song of Marion's Men" is the only piece I ever *did* set my mind on reading: because, as I say, my father was one of the very men himself, and, of course then, I could read it much better than any body else."

"We must all look for disappointments in this life," said Mrs. Parley Utley, demurely.

Mr. Milstead, with his usual address, soon succeeded in pacifying the poor farmer, and bringing him to shake hands with Mr. Edwards: who privately proposed to assist him in studying any piece that he might wish to read at the next meeting. But Mr. Binnage declined the offer: saying, that as he had lost the opportunity of Marion's Men, he was quite discouraged, and should never again prepare himself for reading any thing in company. However, to show that he did not bear malice, he punctually attended all the subsequent reading parties.

Mrs. Gutheridge appeared no more at these assemblages, and Mr. Timmings dropped off after the

second. He was now seldom seen in company, but occasionally some one "prated of his whereabout." The Miss Rambleroads reported that they often saw him prowling round Mrs. Gutheridge's premises: that one day he ventured so far as to lean over her front gate, and fix his eyes on her parlour windows; and that the lady raised the sash, and called to the gardener, and bade him "ask that man what he wanted?" Upon which, Mr. Timmings sneaked off round the corner. And Miss Quickscent was close behind her, when Mrs. Gutheridge in coming out of church dropped her laced and embroidered pocket handkerchief, which Mr. Timmings ran hastily to pick up, oversetting in his career two little girls and a boy. Miss Quickscent deposed that the widow received the handkerchief on the end of her fore finger, and then turned to her servant saying, "Here, Peter, you may take this handkerchief to your wife. I should be wanting to myself were I ever to use it again."

We should far exceed the limits allotted to our narrative, and most probably tire the patience of our readers, were we to enter into any further particulars of the proceedings of the Tamerton Reading Parties. Gradually, the original plan became perverted, and the avowed purpose of the meetings sunk into a matter of minor consideration.

The Scrapefield family, the least opulent of the reading society, had their refreshments in the most expensive style, to show that they were not poor; handing round in abundance, jellies, ice-creams, wine, liqueurs, and plumb-cake. After this, their example was followed, and it was thought expedient that at every meeting, the entertainment, as they called it, should be more and more sumptuous.

The Miss Dodcombs, having returned from town with great accessions to their wardrobes, sported ball-dresses at one of the parties: and from that night, all the young ladies came in thin frocks, bare necks, and flowers; and the elder ones appeared in their best silks, and got new dress caps.

At the close of one of the reading evenings, Mr. Hopkins proposed an extempore cotillon. This was eagerly acceded to by all the young people. There was no piano: but Miss Skreakington and Mr. Quobly volunteered to sing for the dancers; the one performing treble, the other enacting bass. The vocalists proceeded steadily through all the varieties of "La la lalla, la la lay. La lalla lalla, la la lay. Lally lally lally, lally lally lay, &c." till Mr. Milstead disturbed their gravity by remarking that he admired the cotillon very much, particularly the words.

At the next assembly, there was visible impatience in the lady of the house and the young people, to

get the reading party over as soon as possible. Only three or four of the guests were asked to read, and hints were given, that in the choice of pieces, brevity was desirable. As soon as they had gotten through, the centre-table was moved into a corner, the carpet was rolled away (the tacks having been extracted, and the floor prepared in the morning,) most of the chairs were carried out of the room, the fire was nearly extinguished, the scraping of a fiddle was heard in the entry, and black Cæsar, the village Paganini, was ushered into the parlour, and enthroned on a high stool near the door. Cotillons were then the order of the night.

From that time the reading parties were only so in name: none but Mr. and Mrs. Milstead being invited to read after the host or hostess had made a beginning. They were virtually converted into dancing assemblies, with the usual concomitants of ball-dresses and ball-refreshments. Having been the first proposers of the parties, Mr. and Mrs. Milstead were unwilling to withdraw from them entirely, till the season was over, but they now rarely stayed more than an hour.

At length the spring set in, and as the pastor and his lady were going home from the last party, Mrs. Milstead lamented that the ostensible object of the meetings should have been so strangely lost sight

of: deducing the cause from the incontrovertible fact, that but few of the congregation were capable of deriving much pleasure from any thing connected with books.

"True, my dear," replied Mr. Milstead, "but, after all, one of our chief designs has been successfully accomplished. These parties have certainly been the means of putting the families on a more sociable footing, and inducing a more friendly state of feeling towards each other. If the younger members of the company did not take as much interest in the reading as they might have done, they probably found those meetings very much to their satisfaction in other respects. You know we have observed indications of at least half a dozen courtships, possible, probable, and positive. Nay, I have already been bespoken, in my clerical capacity, by no less than three couple. To say the truth, I had little hope of improving the literary taste of my congregation, but I rejoice to have done some good, though indirectly, in breaking down the ridiculous barriers which they had absurdly set up against each other."

A few days after the final reading party, a note arrived for Mr. Milstead just as he quitted the breakfast-table. He read it with a smile, then put it up, and took his hat to go out. His wife inquired

from whom the note came. He replied, "You shall know very shortly: but it concludes with an injunction of secrecy, which for the present must be complied with."

He then left the house, and walked up the main street.

In little more than half an hour he returned, and he had scarcely entered the front door, when the sound of wheels induced Mrs. Milstead to raise her eyes to the window. She saw the carriage of Mrs. Gutheridge drive rapidly past, with trunks behind, and curtains up: and in it, side by side, sat the lady and Mr. Timmings.

"What can this mean!" exclaimed Mrs. Milstead, "Mrs. Gutheridge going to town, and Mr. Timmings with her!"

"And he will return with her also," said Mr. Milstead, "for I have just converted her into Mrs. Timmings!!"

THE SET OF CHINA.

How thrive the beauties of the graphic art?—*Peter Pindar.*

"MR. GUMMAGE," said Mrs. Atmore, as she entered a certain drawing school, at that time the most fashionable in Philadelphia, "I have brought you a new pupil, my daughter, Miss Marianne Atmore. Have you a vacancy."

"Why, I can't say that I have," replied Mr. Gummage; "I never have vacancies."

"I am very sorry to hear it," said Mrs. Atmore; and Miss Marianne, a tall handsome girl of fifteen, looked disappointed.

"But perhaps I *could* strain a point, and find a place for her," resumed Mr. Gummage, who knew very well that he never had the smallest idea of limiting the number of his pupils, and that if twenty more were to apply, he would take them every one, however full his school might be.

"Do pray, Mr. Gummage," said Mrs. Atmore; "do try and make an exertion to admit my daughter; I shall regard it as a particular favour."

"Well, I believe she may come," replied Gummage: "I suppose I can take her. Has she any turn for drawing?"

"I don't know," answered Mrs. Atmore, "she has never tried."

"So much the better," said Gummage; "I like girls that have never tried; they are much more manageable than those that have been scratching and daubing at home all their lives."

Mr. Gummage was no gentleman, either in appearance or manner. But he passed for a genius among those who knew nothing of that ill-understood race. He had a hooked nose that turned to the right, and a crooked mouth that turned to the left—his face being very much out of drawing—and he had two round eyes that in colour and expression resembled two hazel-nuts. His lips were "pea-green and blue," from the habit of putting the brushes into his mouth when they were overcharged with colour. He took snuff illimitably, and generally carried half a dozen handkerchiefs, some of which, however, were to wrap his dinner in, as he conveyed it from market in his capacious pockets;

others, as he said, were "to wipe the girl's saucers."

His usual costume was an old dusty brown coat, corduroy pantaloons, and a waistcoat that had once been red, boots that had once been black, and a low crowned rusty hat—which was never off his head, even in the presence of the ladies—and a bandanna cravat. The vulgarity of his habits, and the rudeness of his deportment all passed off under the title of eccentricity. At the period when he flourished—it was long before the time of Sully—the beau ideal of an artist, at least among the multitude, was an ugly, ill-mannered, dirty fellow, that painted an inch thick in divers gaudy colours, equally irreconcilable to nature and art. And the chief attractions of a drawing master—for Mr. Gummage was nothing more—lay in doing almost every thing himself, and producing for his pupils, in their first quarter, pictures (so called) that were pronounced "fit to frame."

"Well, madam," said Mr. Gummage, "what do you wish your daughter to learn? figures, flowers, or landscapes?"

"Oh! all three," replied Mrs. Atmore. "We have been furnishing our new house, and I told Mr. Atmore that he need not get any pictures for the front parlour, as I would much prefer having them

all painted by Marianne. She has been four quarters with Miss Julia,* and has worked Friendship and Innocence, which cost, altogether, upwards of a hundred dollars. Do you know the piece, Mr. Gummage? There is a tomb with a weeping willow, and two ladies with long hair, one drest in pink the other in blue, holding a wreath between them over the top of the urn. The ladies are Friendship. Then on the right hand of the piece is a cottage, and an oak, and a little girl dressed in yellow, sitting on a green bank, and putting a wreath round the neck of a lamb. Nothing can be more natural than the lamb's wool. It is done entirely in French knots. The child and the lamb are Innocence."

"Ay, ay," said Gummage, "I know the piece well enough—I've drawn them by dozens."

"Well," continued Mrs. Atmore, "this satin piece hangs over the front parlour mantel. It is much prettier and better done than the one Miss Longstitch worked of Charlotte at the tomb of Werter, though she did sew silver spangles all over Charlotte's lilac gown, and used chenille, at a fi'-penny-bit a needleful, for all the banks and the large tree. Now, as the mantel-piece is provided for, I wish a

* Miss Julianna Bater, an old Moravian lady, from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, who was well known in Philadelphia, many years since, as a teacher of embroidery.

landscape for each of the recesses, and a figure-piece to hang on each side of the large looking-glass, with flower-pieces under them, all by Marianne. Can she do all these in one quarter?"

"No, that she can't," replied Gummage; "it will take her two quarters hard work, and may-be three, to get through the whole of them."

"Well, I won't stand about a quarter more or less," said Mrs. Atmore; "but what I wish Marianne to do most particularly, and, indeed, the chief reason why I send her to drawing-school just now, is a pattern for a set of china that we are going to have made in Canton. I was told the other day by a New York lady, (who was quite tired of the queer unmeaning things which are generally put on India ware,) that she had sent a pattern for a tea-set, drawn by her daughter, and that every article came out with the identical device beautifully done on the china, all in the proper colours. She said it was talked of all over New York, and that people who had never been in her house before, came to look at and admire it. No doubt it was a great feather in her daughter's cap."

"Possibly, madam," said Gummage.

"And now," resumed Mrs. Atmore, "since I heard this, I have thought of nothing else than having the same thing done in my family; only I shall

send for a dinner set, and a very long one too. Mr. Atmore tells me that the Voltaire, one of Stephen Girard's ships, sails for Canton early next month, and he is well acquainted with the captain, who will attend to the order for the china. I suppose in the course of a fortnight Marianne will have learnt drawing enough to enable her to do the pattern?"

"Oh! yes, madam—quite enough," replied Gummage, suppressing a laugh.

"Very well," said Mrs. Atmore. "And now, Mr. Gummage, let me look at some of your models."

"Figures, flowers, or landscapes?" asked the artist.

"Oh! some of each," replied the lady.

Mr. Gummage had so many pupils—both boys and girls—and so many classes, and gave lessons besides, at so many boarding [illegible] he had no leisure time for receiving [illegible] and as he kept his domicile incog. [illegible] [illegible]iters at his school-room. Foreseeing [illegible] [illegible]ation of the prints, he took from a hanging shelf several of his numerous port-folios, and having placed them on a table before Mrs. Atmore and her daughter, he proceeded to go round and direct his present class of young ladies, who were all sitting at the

drawing-desks in their bonnets and shawls, because the apartment afforded no accommodation for these habiliments if laid aside. Each young lady was leaning over a straining-frame, on which was pasted a sheet of drawing-paper, and each seemed engaged in attempting to copy one of the coloured engravings that were fastened by a slip of cleft cane to the cord of twine that ran along the wall. The benches were dusty, the floor dirty and slopped with spilt water; and the windows, for want of washing, looked more like horn than glass. The school-room and teacher were all in keeping. Yet for many years Mr. Gummage was so much in fashion that no other drawing-masters, not even Beck and Smith, [illegible] least chance of success. Those who recollected the original, will not think his portrait overcharged.

We left Mr. Gummage going round his class for the purpose of giving a glance, and saying a few words [illegible]

"Miss [illegible] lay down the lid of your paint-box. No rulers shall be used in my school, as I have often told you."

"But, Mr. Gummage, only look at the walls of my castle; they are all leaning to one side; both the turrets stand crooked, and the doors and windows slant every way."

"No matter, it's my rule that nobody shall use a rule. Miss Miller, have you rubbed the blue and bistre I told you?"

"Yes sir; I've been at it all the afternoon; here it is."

"Why, that's not half enough."

"Mr. Gummage, I've rubbed, and rubbed till my arm aches to the shoulder, and my face is all in a glow."

"Then take off your bonnet, and cool yourself. I tell you there's not half enough. Why, my boys rub blue and bistre till their faces run of a stream; I make them take off their coats to it."

"Mr. Gummage," said one young lady, "you promised to put in my sky to-day."

"Mr. Gummage," said another, "I've been waiting for my distances these two weeks. How can I go any farther till you have done them for me?"

"Finish the fore-ground to-day. It is time enough for the distances: I'll put them in on Friday."

"Mr. Gummage," said another, "my river has been expecting you since last Wednesday."

"Why, you have not put in the boat yet. Do the boat to-day, and the fisherman on the shore. But look at your bridge! Every arch is of a different size—some big, and some little."

"Well, Mr. Gummage, it is your own fault—you

should let me use compasses. I have a pair in my box—do, pray, let me use them."

"No, I won't. My plan is that you shall all draw entirely by the eye."

"That is the reason we make every thing so crooked."

"I see nothing more crooked than yourselves," replied the polite drawing-master.

"Mr. Gummage," said another young lady, raising her eyes from a novel that she had brought with her, "I have done nothing at my piece for at least a fortnight. I have been all the time waiting for you to put in my large tree."

"Hush this moment with your babbling, every soul of you," said the teacher, in an under tone: "don't you see there are strangers here? What an unreasonable pack of fools you are! Can I do every body's piece at once? Learn to have patience, one and all of you, and wait till your turn comes."

Some of the girls tossed their heads and pouted, and some laughed, and some quitted their desks and amused themselves by looking out at the windows. But the instructor turned his back on them, and walked off towards the table at which Mrs. Atmore and her daughter were seated with the port folios, both making incessant exclamations of "How beautiful!—how elegant!—how sweet!"

"Oh! here are Romeo and Juliet in the tomb scene!" cried Marianne. "Look, mamma, is it not lovely?—the very play in which we saw Cooper and Mrs. Merry. Oh! do let me paint Romeo and Juliet for the dinner set! But stop—here's the Shepherdess of the Alps! how magnificent! I think I would rather do that for the china. And here's Mary Queen of Scots; I remember her ever since I read history. And here are Telemachus and Minerva, just as I translated about them in my Telemaque exercises. Oh! let me do them for the dinner set—shan't I, Mr. Gummage?"

"I don't see any figure-pieces in which the colours are bright enough," remarked Mrs. Atmore.

"As to that," observed Gummage—who knew that the burthen of the drawing would eventually fall on him, and who never liked to do figures—"I don't believe that any of these figure pieces would look well if reduced so small as to go on china plates."

"Well,—here are some very fine landscapes," pursued Mrs. Atmore; "Here's the Cascade of Tivoli—and here's a view in Jamaica—and here's Glastonbury Abbey."

"Oh! I dote on abbeys," cried Marianne, "for the sake of Amanda Fitzalan."

"Your papa will not approve of your doing this,"

observed Mrs. Atmore: "you know, he says that abbeys are nothing but old tumble-down churches."

"If I may not do an abbey, let me do a castle," said Marianne: "there's Conway Castle by moonlight—how natural the moon looks!"

"As to castles," replied Miss Atmore, "you know your papa says they are no better than old jails. He hates both abbeys and castles."

"Well, here is a noble country seat," said Marianne—"'Chiswick House.'"

"Your papa has no patience with country seats," rejoined Mrs. Atmore. "He says that when people have made their money, they had better stay in town to enjoy it; where they can be convenient to the market, and the stores, and the post office, and the coffee house. He likes a good comfortable three story brick mansion, in a central part of the city, with marble steps, iron railings, and green venetian shutters."

"To cut the matter short," said Mr. Gummage, "the best thing for the china is a flower piece—a basket, or a wreath—or something of that sort. You can have a good cypher in the centre, and the colours may be as bright as you please. India ware is generally painted with one colour only; but the Chinese are submissive animals, and will do just as

they are bid. It may cost something more to have a variety of colours; but I suppose you will not mind that."

"Oh! no—no," exclaimed Mrs. Atmore, "I shall not care for the price; I have set my mind on having this china the wonder of all Philadelphia."

Our readers will understand, that at this period nearly all the porcelain used in America was of Chinese manufacture; very little of that elegant article having been, as yet, imported from France.

A wreath was selected from the port folio that contained the engravings and drawings of flowers. It was decided that Marianne should first execute it the full size of the model (which was as large as nature), that she might immediately have a piece to frame; and that she was afterwards to make a smaller copy of it, as a border for all the articles of the china set; the middle to be ornamented with the letter A, in gold, surrounded by the rays of a golden star. Sprigs and tendrils of the flowers were to branch down from the border, so as nearly to reach the gilding in the middle. The large wreath that was intended to frame, was to bear in its centre the initials of Marianne Atmore, being the letters M. A., painted in shell gold.

"And so," said Mr. Gunmage, "having a piece

to frame, and a pattern for your china, you'll kill two birds with one stone."

On the following Monday, the young lady came to take her first lesson, followed by a mulatto boy, carrying a little black morocco trunk, that contained a four row box of Reeves's colours, with an assortment of camel's hair pencils, half a dozen white saucers, a water cup, a lead pencil, and a piece of India rubber. Mr. Gummage immediately supplied her with two bristle brushes, and sundry little shallow earthen cups, each containing a modicum of some sort of body colour, masticot, flake white, &c. prepared by himself and charged at a quarter of a dollar a piece, and which he told her she would want when she came to do landscapes and figures.

Mr. Gummage's style was, to put in the sky, water, and distances with opaque paints, and the most prominent objects with transparent colours. This was probably the reason that his foregrounds seemed always to be sunk in his backgrounds. The model was scarcely considered as a guide, for he continually told his pupils that they must try to excel it; and he helped them to do so by making all his skies deep red fire at the bottom, and dark blue smoke at the top; and exactly reversing the colours on the water, by putting red at the top, and blue at the bottom. The distant mountains were lilac and

white, and the near rocks buff colour, shaded with purple. The castles and abbeys were usually gamboge. The trees were dabbed and dotted in with a large bristle brush, so that the foliage looked like a green fog. The foam of the cascades resembled a concourse of wigs, scuffling together and knocking the powder out of each other, the spray being always fizzed on with one of the aforesaid bristle brushes. All the dark shadows in every part of the picture were done with a mixture of Prussian blue and bistre, and of these two colours there was consequently a vast comsumption in Mr. Gummage's school. At the period of our story, many of the best houses in Philadelphia were decorated with these landscapes. But for the honour of my townspeople, I must say that the taste for such productions is now entirely obsolete. We may look forward to the time, which we trust is not far distant, when the elements of drawing will be taught in every school, and considered as indispensable to education as a knowledge of writing. It has long been our belief that *any* child may, with proper instruction, be made to draw, as easily as any child may be made to write. We are rejoiced to find that so distinguished an artist as Rembrandt Peale has avowed the same opinion, in giving to the world his invaluable little work on Graphics: in which he has clearly de-

monstrated the affinity between drawing and writing, and admirably exemplified the leading principles of both.

Marianne's first attempt at the great wreath was awkward enough. After she had spent five or six afternoons at the outline, and made it triangular rather than circular, and found it impossible to get in the sweet pea, and the convolvolus, and lost and bewildered herself among the multitude of leaves that formed the cup of the rose, Mr. Gummage snatched the pencil from her hand, rubbed out the whole, and then drew it himself. It must be confessed that his forte lay in flowers, and he was extremely clever at them, "but," as he expressed it, "his scholars chiefly ran upon landscapes."

After he had sketched the wreath, he directed Marianne to rub the colours for her flowers, while he put in Miss Smithson's rocks.

When Marianne had covered all her saucers with colours, and wasted ten times as much as was necessary, she was eager to commence painting, as she called it; and in trying to wash the rose with lake, she daubed it on of crimson thickness. When Mr. Gummage saw it, he gave her a severe reprimand for meddling with her own piece. It was with great difficulty that the superabundant colour was removed; and he charged her to let the flowers alone

till he was ready to wash them for her. He worked a little at the piece every day, forbidding Marianne to touch it: and she remained idle while he was putting in skies, mountains, &c. for the other young ladies.

At length the wreath was finished—Mr. Gummage having only sketched it, and washed it, and given it the last touches. It was put into a splendid frame, and shown as Miss Marianne Atmore's first attempt at painting: and every body exclaimed, "What an excellent teacher Mr. Gummage must be! How fast he brings on his pupils!"

In the meantime, she undertook at home to make the small copy that was to go to China. But she was now "at a dead lock," and found it utterly impossible to advance a step without Mr. Gummage. It was then thought best that she should do it at school—meaning that Mr. Gummage should do it for her, while she looked out of the window.

The whole was at last satisfactorily accomplished, even to the gilt star, with the A in the centre. It was taken home and compared with the larger wreath, and found still prettier, and shown as Marianne's to the envy of all mothers whose daughters could not furnish models for china. It was finally given in charge to the captain of the Voltaire, with injunctions to order a dinner-set exactly according

to the pattern—and to prevent the possibility of a mistake, a written direction accompanied it.

The ship sailed—and Marianne continued three quarters at Mr. Gummage's school, where she nominally effected another flower piece, and also perpetrated Kemble in Rolla, Edwin and Angelina, the Falls of Schuylkill, and the Falls of Niagara; all of which were duly framed, and hung in their appointed places.

During the year that followed the departure of the ship Voltaire, great impatience for her return was manifested by the ladies of the Atmore family, —anxious to see how the china would look, and frequently hoping that the colours would be bright enough, and none of the flowers omitted—that the gilding would be rich, and every thing inserted in its proper place, exactly according to the pattern. Mrs. Atmore's only regret was, that she had not sent for a tea-set also; not that she was in want of one, but then it would be so much better to have a dinner-set and a tea-set precisely alike, and Marianne's beautiful wreath on all.

"Why, my dear," said Mr. Atmore, "how often have I heard you say that you would never have another *tea*-set from Canton, because the Chinese persist in making the principal articles of such old fashioned, awkward shapes. For my part, I always

disliked the tall coffee pots, with their strait spouts, looking like light-houses with bowsprits to them; and the short, clumsy tea-pots, with their twisted handles, and lids that always fall off."

"To be sure," said Mrs. Atmore, "I have been looking forward to the time when we can get a French tea-set upon tolerable terms. But in the meanwhile I should be very glad to have cups and saucers with Marianne's beautiful wreath, and of course when we use them on the table we should always bring forward our silver pots."

Spring returned, and there was much watching of the vanes, and great joy when they pointed easterly, and the ship-news now became the most interesting column of the papers. A vessel that had sailed from New York for Canton on the same day the Voltaire departed from Philadelphia, had already got in; therefore the Voltaire might be hourly expected. At length she was reported below; and at this period the river Delaware suffered much, in comparison with the river Hudson, owing to the tediousness of its navigation from the capes to the city.

At last the Voltaire cast anchor at the foot of Market street, and our ladies could scarcely refrain from walking down to the wharf to see the ship that held the box that held the china. But invitations were immediately sent out for a long projected din-

ner-party, which Mrs. Atmore had persuaded her husband to defer till they could exhibit the beautiful new porcelain.

The box was landed, and conveyed to the house. The whole family were present at the opening, which was performed in the dining room by Mr. Atmore himself,—all the servants peeping in at the door. As soon as a part of the lid was split off, and a handful of straw removed, a pile of plates appeared, all separately wrapped in India paper. Each of the family snatched up a plate and hastily tore off the covering. There were the flowers glowing in beautiful colours, and the gold star and the gold A, admirably executed. But under the gold star, on every plate, dish, and tureen, were the words, "THIS IN THE MIDDLE!"—being the direction which the literal and exact Chinese had minutely copied from a crooked line that Mr. Atmore had hastily scrawled on the pattern with a very bad pen, and of course without the slightest fear of its being inserted *verbatim* beneath the central ornament.

Mr. Atmore laughed—Mrs. Atmore cried—the servants giggled aloud—and Marianne cried first, and laughed afterwards.

LAURA LOVEL.

The world is still deceived with ornament.—*Shakspeare.*

Laura Lovel was the eldest surviving daughter of a clergyman settled in a retired and beautiful village at the western extremity of the state of Massachusetts. Between Laura and her two youngest sisters, three other children had died. Being so much their senior, it was in her power to assist her father materially in the instruction of Ella and Rosa; as after his family had become small, Mr. Lovel thought it best that the two little girls should receive all their education at home, and never were children that conferred more credit on their teachers. Mrs. Lovel was a plain, good woman, of excellent practical sense, a notable seamstress, and a first rate housewife. Few families were more perfectly happy, notwithstanding that the limited income of Mr.

Lovel (though sufficient for comfort) left them little or nothing for superfluities.

They had a very neat house standing in the centre of a flourishing garden, in which utility had been the first consideration, though blended as far as possible with beauty. The stone fence looked like a hedge of nasturtians. The pillars supporting the rustic piazza that surrounded the house, were the rough trunks of small trees, with a sufficient portion of the chief branches remaining, to afford resting places for the luxuriant masses of scarlet beans that ran over them; furnishing, when the blossoms were off, and the green pods full grown, an excellent vegetable-dish for the table. The house was shaded with fruit-trees exclusively; and the garden shrubs were all raspberry, currant, and gooseberry, and the flowers were chiefly those that had medicinal properties, or could be turned to culinary purposes—with the exception of some that were cultivated purposely for the bees. A meadow which pastured two cows and a horse, completed the little domain.

About the time that Laura Lovel had finished her seventeenth year, there came to the village of Rosebrook an old friend of her father's, whom he had long since lost sight of. They had received their early education at the same school, they had met again at college, and had some years after performed

together a voyage to India; Mr. Brantley as supercargo, Mr. Lovel as a missionary. Mr. Brantley had been very successful in business, and was now a merchant of wealth and respectability, with a handsome establishment in Boston. Mr. Lovel had settled down as pastor of the principal church in his native village.

The object of Mr. Brantley's present visit to Rosebrook, was to inquire personally into the state of some property he still retained there. Mr. Lovel would not allow his old friend to remain at the tavern, but insisted that *his* house should be his abiding place; and they had much pleasure in comparing their reminiscences of former times. As their chief conversation was on topics common to both, Mr. Lovel did not perceive that, except upon mercantile subjects, Mr. Brantley had acquired few new ideas since they had last met, and that his reading was confined exclusively to the newspapers. But he saw that in quiet good-nature, and easiness of disposition, his old friend was still the same as in early life.

Mr. Brantley was so pleased with every member of the Lovel family, and liked his visit so much, that he was induced to prolong it two days beyond his first intention; and he expressed an earnest desire to take Laura home with him, to pass a few weeks with his wife and daughter. This pro-

posal, however, was declined, with sincere acknowledgments for its kindness; Mr. Lovel's delicacy making him unwilling to send his daughter, as a guest, to a lady who as yet was ignorant of her existence, and Laura sharing in her father's scruples.

Mr. Brantley took his leave: and three months afterwards he paid a second visit to Rosebrook, for the purpose of selling his property in that neighbourhood. He brought with him a short but very polite letter from his wife to Mr. and Mrs. Lovel, renewing the invitation for Laura, and pressing it in a manner that could scarcely be withstood. Mr. Lovel began to waver; Mrs. Lovel thought it was time that Laura should see a little of the world, and Laura's speaking looks told how much pleasure she anticipated from the excursion. The two little girls, though their eyes filled at the idea of being separated from their beloved sister, most magnanimously joined in entreating permission for her to go, as they saw that she wished it. Finally, Mr. Lovel consented; and Laura seemed to tread on air while making her preparations for the journey.

That evening, at the hour of family worship, her father laid his hand on Laura's head, and uttered a fervent prayer for the preservation of her health and happiness during her absence from the paternal roof. Mrs. Lovel and all her daughters were deeply af-

fected, and Mr. Brantley looked very much inclined to participate in their emotion.

Early next morning Mr. Brantley's chaise was at the door, and Laura took leave of the family with almost as many tears and kisses as if she had been going to cross the Atlantic. Little Ella, who was about eight years old, presented her, at parting, with a very ingenious needle-book of her own making, and Rosa, who was just seven, gave her as a keepsake, an equally clever pincushion. She promised to bring them new books and other little presents from Boston, a place in which they supposed every thing that the world produced, could be obtained without difficulty.

Finally, the last farewell was uttered, the last kiss was given, and Laura Lovel took her seat in the chaise beside Mr. Brantley, who drove off at a rapid pace; and in a few moments, a turn in the road hid from her view the house of her father, and the affectionate group that still lingered at its gate to catch the latest glimpse of the vehicle that was bearing away from them the daughter and the sister.

As they proceeded on their journey, Laura's spirits gradually revived, and she soon became interested or delighted with every thing she beheld; for she had a quick perception, with a mind of much intelligence and depth of observation.

The second day of their journey had nearly closed before the spires of the Boston churches, and the majestic dome of the State House met the intense gaze of our heroine. Thousands of lights soon twinkled over the city of the three hills, and the long vistas of lamps that illuminated the bridges, seemed to the unpractised eyes of Laura Lovel to realize the glories of the Arabian Nights. "Oh!" she involuntarily exclaimed, "if my dear little sisters could only be with me now."

As they entered by the western avenue, and as Mr. Brantley's residence was situated in the eastern part of the city, Laura had an opportunity of seeing as she passed, a vast number of lofty, spacious, and noble-looking dwelling-houses, in the erection of which the patrician families of Boston, have perhaps surpassed all the other aristocracies of the Union; for sternly republican as are our laws and institutions, it cannot be denied that in private life every section of our commonwealth has its aristocracy.

At length they stopped at Mr. Brantley's door, and Laura had a very polite reception from the lady of the mansion, an indolent, good-natured, insipid woman, the chief business of whose life was dress and company. Mr. Brantley had purchased a large and handsome house in the western part of the town, to which the family were to remove in the course

of the autumn, and it was Mrs. Brantley's intention, when they were settled in their new and elegant establishment, to get into a higher circle, and to have weekly soirées. To make her parties the more attractive, she was desirous of engaging some very pretty young lady (a stranger with a new face) to pass the winter with her. She had but one child, a pert, forward girl about fourteen, thin, pale, and seeming "as if she suffered a great deal in order to look pretty." She sat, stood, and moved, as if in constant pain from the tightness of her corsets, the smallness of her sleeve holes, and the narrowness of her shoes. Her hair, having been kept long during the whole period of her childhood, was exhausted with incessant tying, brushing, and curling, and she was already obliged to make artificial additions to it. It was at this time a mountain of bows, plaits, and puffs; and her costume was in every respect that of a woman of twenty. She was extremely anxious to "come out," as it is called, but her father insisted on her staying in, till she had finished her education; and her mother had been told that it was very impolitic to allow young ladies to "appear in society" at too early an age, as they were always supposed to be older than they really were, and therefore would be the sooner considered passée.

After tea, Mrs. Brantley reclined herself idly in one of the rocking-chairs, Mr. Brantley retired to the back parlour to read undisturbed the evening papers, and Augusta took up some bead-work, while Laura looked over the Souvenirs with which the centre-table was strewed.

"How happy you must be, Miss Brantley," said Laura, "to have it in your power to read so many new books."

"As to reading," replied Augusta, "I never have any time to spare for that purpose; what with my music, and my dancing, and my lessons in French conversation, and my worsted-work, and my bead-work; then I have every day to go out shopping, for I always *will* choose every thing for myself. Mamma has not the least idea of my taste; at least, she never remembers it. And then there is always some business with the mantua-makers and milliners. And I have so many morning visits to pay with mama—and in the afternoon I am generally so tired that I can do nothing but put on a wrapper, and throw myself on the bed, and sleep till it is time to dress for evening."

"Oh!" thought Laura Lovel, "how differently do we pass our time at Rosebrook!—Is not this a beautiful engraving?" she continued, holding one of the open Souvenirs towards Augusta.

"Yes—pretty enough," replied Augusta, scarcely turning her head to look at it.—"Mamma, do not you think I had better have my green pelerine cut in points rather than in scollops?"

"I think," replied Mrs. Brantley, "that scollops are the prettiest."

"Really, mamma," said Augusta, petulantly, "it is very peculiar in you to say so, when you ought to know that scollops have had their day, and that points have come round again."

"Very well, then, my love," replied Mrs. Brantley indolently, "consult your own taste."

"That I always do," said Augusta, half aside to Laura, who, addressing herself to Mrs. Brantley, made some inquiry about the last new novel.

"I cannot say that I have read it," answered Mrs. Brantley, "at least, I don't know that I have. Augusta, my love, do you recollect if you have heard me say any thing about the last new book—the—a—the—what is it you call it, Miss Lovel?"

"La! mamma," said Augusta, "I should as soon expect you to write a book as to read one."

There was a pause for a minute or two. Augusta then leaning back towards her mother, exclaimed, "Upon second thoughts, I think I will have the green pelerine scolloped, and the blue one pointed. But the points shall be squared at the ends—on that I am determined."

Laura now took up a volume of the juvenile annual, entitled the Pearl, and said to Augusta, "You have, most probably, a complete set of the Pearl."

"After all, mamma," pursued Augusta, "butterfly bows are much prettier than shell bows. What were you saying just now, Miss Lovel, about my having a set of pearls?—you may well ask;"—looking spitefully towards the back-parlour, in which her father was sitting. "Papa holds out that he will not give me a set till I am eighteen; and as to gold chains, and corals, and cornelians, I am sick of them, and I won't wear them at all; so you see me without any ornaments whatever, which you must think very peculiar."

Laura had tact enough to perceive that any further attempt at a conversation on books, would be unavailing; and she made some inquiry about the annual exhibition of pictures at the Athenæum.

"I believe it is a very good one," replied Mrs. Brantley. "We stopped there one day on our way to dine with some friends out of town. But as the carriage was waiting, and the horses were impatient, we only stayed a few minutes, just long enough to walk round."

"Oh! yes, mamma," cried Augusta, "and don't you recollect we saw Miss Darford there in a new dress of lavender-coloured grenadine, though grena-

dines have been over these hundred years. And there was pretty Mrs. Lenham, as the gentlemen call her, in a puce-coloured italianet, though italianets have been out for ages. And don't you remember Miss Grover's canary-coloured reps bonnet, that looked as if it had been made in the ark. The idea of any one wearing reps! a thing that has not been seen since the flood! Only think of reps!"

Laura Lovel wondered what *reps* could possibly be. "Now I talk of bonnets," pursued Augusta; "pray, mamma, did you tell Miss Pipingcord that I would have my Tuscan Leghorn trimmed with the lilac and green riband, instead of the blue and yellow?"

"Indeed," replied Mrs. Brantley, "I found your cousin Mary so extremely ill this afternoon when I went to see her, and my sister so very uneasy on her account, that I absolutely forgot to call at the milliner's as I had promised you."

"Was there ever any thing so vexatious!" exclaimed Augusta, throwing down her bead-work—"Really, mamma, there is no trusting you at all. You never remember to do any thing you are desired." And flying to the bell she rang it with violence.

"I could think of nothing but poor Mary's danger," said Mrs. Brantley, "and the twenty-five leeches that I saw on her forehead."

"Dreadful!" ejaculated Augusta. "But you might have supposed that the leeches would do her good, as of course they will. Here, William," addressing the servant man that had just entered; "run as if you were running for your life to Miss Pipingcord, the milliner, and tell her upon no account whatever to trim Miss Brantley's Tuscan Leghorn with the blue and yellow riband that was decided on yesterday. Tell her I have changed my mind, and resolved upon the lilac and green. Fly as if you had not another moment to live, or Miss Pipingcord will have already trimmed the bonnet with the blue and yellow."

"And then," said Mrs. Brantley, "go to Mrs. Ashmore's, and inquire how Miss Mary is this evening."

"Why, mamma," exclaimed Augusta, "aunt Ashmore lives so far from Miss Pipingcord's that it will be ten or eleven o'clock before William gets back, and I shall be all that time on thorns to know if she has not already disfigured my bonnet with the vile blue and yellow."

"Yesterday," said Mrs. Brantley, "you admired that very riband extremely."

"So I did," replied Augusta, "but I have been thinking about it since, and, as I tell you, I have changed my mind. And now that I have set my

heart upon the lilac and green, I absolutely detest the blue and yellow."

"But I am really very anxious to know how Mary is to-night," said Mrs. Brantley.

"Oh!" replied Augusta, "I dare say the leeches have relieved her. And if they have not, no doubt Dr. Warren will order twenty-five more—or something else that will answer the purpose. She is in very good hands—I am certain that in the morning we shall hear she is considerably better. At all events I *will not* wear the hateful blue and yellow riband—William what are you standing for?"

The man turned to leave the room, but Mrs. Brantley called him back. "William," said she, "tell one of the women to go to Mrs. Ashmore's and inquire how Miss Mary is."

"Eliza and Matilda are both out," said William, "and Louisa is crying with the tooth-ache, and steaming her face over hot yerbs—I guess she won't be willing to walk so far in the night-air, just out of the steam."

"William!" exclaimed Augusta, stamping with her foot, "don't stand here talking, but go at once; there's not a moment to lose. Tell Miss Pipingcord if she *has* put on that horrid riband, she must take it off again, and charge it in the bill, if she pretends she can't afford to lose it, as I dare say she

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will—and tell her to be sure and send the bonnet home early in the morning—I am dying to see it."

To all this Laura Lovel had sat listening in amazement, and could scarcely conceive the possibility of the mind of so young a girl being totally absorbed in things that concerned nothing but external appearance. She had yet to learn that a passion for dress, when thoroughly excited in the female bosom, and carried to excess. has a direct tendency to cloud the understanding, injure the temper, and harden the heart.

Till the return of William, Augusta seemed indeed to be on thorns. At last he came, and brought with him the bonnet, trimmed with the blue and yellow. Augusta snatched it out of the bandbox, and stood speechless with passion, and William thus delivered his message from the milliner—

"Miss Pippincod sends word that she had riband'd the bonnet afore I come for it—she says she has used up all her laylock green for another lady's bonnet, as chose it this very afternoon; and she guesses you won't stand no chance of finding no more of it, if you sarch Boston through; and she says, she shew you all her ribands yesterday, and you chose the yellow blue yourself, and she han't got no more ribands as you'd be likely to like. Them's her very words."

"How I hate milliners!" exclaimed Augusta; and ringing for the maid that always assisted her in undressing, she flounced out of the room and went to bed.

"Miss Lovel," said Mrs. Brantley, smiling, "you must excuse dear Augusta. She is extremely sensitive about every thing, and that is the reason she is apt to give way to these little fits of irritation."

Laura retired to her room, grieving to think how unamiable a young girl might be made, by the indulgence of an inordinate passion for dress.

Augusta's cousin Mary did not die.

The following day was to have been devoted to shopping, and to making some additions to the simple wardrobe of Laura Lovel, for which purpose her father had given her as much money as he could possibly spare. But it rained till late in the afternoon, and Mrs. Brantley's coach was out of order, and the Brantleys (like many other families that kept carriages of their own) could not conceive the possibility of *hiring* a similar vehicle upon any exigency whatever.

It is true that the present case was in reality no exigency at all; but Mrs. Brantley and her daughter seemed to consider it as such, from the one watching the clouds all day as she sat at the window, in her rocking-chair, and the other wandering about like a

troubled spirit, fretting all the time, and complaining of the weather. Laura got through the hours very well, between reading Souvenirs (almost the only books in the house) and writing a long letter to inform her family of her safe arrival, and to describe her journey. Towards evening, a coach was heard to stop at the door, and there was a violent ringing, followed by a loud sharp voice in the entry, inquiring for Mrs. Brantley, who started from her rocking-chair, as Augusta exclaimed "Miss Frampton!—I know 'tis Miss Frampton!" The young lady rushed into the hall, while her mother advanced a few steps, and Mr. Brantley threw down his paper, and hastened into the front-parlour with a look that expressed any thing but satisfaction.

There was no time for comment or preparation. The sound was heard of baggage depositing, and in a few moments Augusta returned to the parlour, hanging lovingly on the arm of a lady in a very handsome travelling dress, who flew to Mrs. Brantley and kissed her familiarly, and then shook hands with her husband, and was introduced by him to our heroine.

Miss Frampton was a fashionable looking woman, of no particular age. Her figure was good, but her features were the contrary, and the expression of her eye was strikingly bad. She had no relations,

but she talked incessantly of her *friends*—for so she called every person whom she knew by sight, provided always that they were *presentable* people. She had some property, on the income of which she lived, exercising close economy in every thing but dress. Sometimes she boarded out, and sometimes she billeted herself on one or other of these said friends, having no scruples of delicacy to deter her from eagerly availing herself of the slightest hint that might be construed into the semblance of an invitation. In short, she was assiduous in trying to get acquainted with every body from whom any thing was to be gained, flattering them to their faces, though she abused them behind their backs. Still, strange to tell, she had succeeded in forcing her way into the outworks of what is called society. She drest well, professed to know every body, and to go every where, was au fait to all the gossip of the day, and could always furnish ample food for the too prevailing appetite for scandal. Therefore, though every one disliked Miss Frampton, still every one tolerated her; and though a notorious calumniator, she excited so much fear, that it was generally thought safer to keep up some slight intercourse with her, than to affront her by throwing her off entirely.

Philadelphia was her usual place of residence; but she had met the Brantley family at the Saratoga Springs, had managed to accompany them to New York on their way home, had boarded at Bunker's during the week they stayed at that house, had assisted them in their shopping expeditions, and professed a violent regard for Augusta, who professed the same for her. Mrs. Brantley's slight intimation "that she should be glad to see her if ever she came to Boston," Miss Frampton had now taken advantage of, on pretext of benefiting by change of air. Conscious of her faded looks, but still hoping to pass for a young woman, she pretended always to be in precarious health, though of this there was seldom any proof positive.

On being introduced to Laura Lovel, as to a young lady on a visit to the family, Miss Frampton, who at once considered her an interloper, surveyed our heroine from head to foot, with something like a sneer, and exchanged significant glances with Augusta.

As soon as Miss Frampton had taken her seat, "My dear Mrs. Brantley," said she, "how delighted I am to see you! And my sweet Augusta, too! Why she has grown a perfect sylph!"

After hearing this, Augusta could not keep her

seat five minutes together, but was gliding and flitting about all the remainder of the evening, and hovering round Miss Frampton's chair.

Miss Frampton continued, "Yes, my dear Mrs. Brantley, my health has, as usual, been extremely delicate. My friends have been seriously alarmed for me, and all my physicians have been quite miserable on my account. Dr. Dengue has been seen driving through the streets like a madman, in his haste to get to me. Poor man—you must have heard the report of his suffering Mrs. Smith's baby to die with the croup, from neglecting to visit it, which, if true, was certainly in very bad taste. However, Dr. Dengue is one of my oldest friends, and a most charming man."

"But, as I was saying, my health still continued delicate, and excitement was unanimously recommended by the medical gentlemen—excitement and ice-cream. And as soon as this was known in society, it is incredible how many parties were made for me, and how many excursions were planned on my account. I had carriages at my door day and night. My friends were absolutely dragging me from each other's arms. Finally they all suggested entire change of air, and total change of scene. So I consented to tear myself awhile from my be-

loved Philadelphia, and pay you my promised visit in Boston."

"We are much obliged to you," said Mrs. Brantley. "And really," pursued Miss Frampton, "I had so many engagements on my hands, that I had fixed five different days for starting, and disappointed five different escorts. My receiving-room was like a levee every morning at visiting hours, with young gentleman of fashion, coming to press their services, as is always the case when it is reported in Philadelphia that Miss Frampton has a disposition to travel. A whole procession of my friends accompanied me to the steamboat, and I believe I had more then a dozen elegant smelling-bottles presented to me—as it is universally known how much I always suffer during a journey, being deadly sick on the water, and in a constant state of nervous agitation while riding."

"And who did you come with at last?" asked Mrs. Brantley.

"Oh! with my friends the Twamberleys, of your city," replied Miss Frampton. "The whole family had been at Washington, and as soon as I heard they were in Philadelphia on their return home, I sent to inquire—that is, or rather, I mean, *they* sent to inquire as soon as they came to town, and heard that

I intended visiting Boston—they sent to inquire if I would make them happy by joining their party."

"Well," observed Mr. Brantley, "I cannot imagine how you got along with all the Twamberleys. Mr. Twamberley, besides being a clumsy, fat man, upwards of seventy years old, and lame with the gout, and nearly quite deaf, and having cataracts coming on both eyes, is always obliged to travel with his silly young wife, and the eight children of her first husband, and I should think he had enough to do in taking care of himself and them. I wonder you did not prefer availing yourself of the politeness of some of the single gentlemen you mentioned."

"Oh!" replied Miss Frampton, "any of them would have been too happy, as they politely expressed it, to have had the pleasure of waiting on me to Boston. Indeed, I knew not how to make a selection, being unwilling to offend any of them by a preference. And then again, it is always in better taste for young ladies to travel, and, indeed, to go every where, under the wing of a married woman. I doat upon chaperones; and by coming with this family, I had Mrs. Twamberley to matronize me. I have just parted with them all at their own door, where they were set down."

Mr. Brantley smiled when he thought of Mrs.

Twamberley (who had been married to her first husband at fifteen, and was still a blooming girlish looking woman) matronizing the faded Miss Frampton, so evidently by many years her senior.

Laura Lovel, though new to the world, had sufficient good sense and penetration to perceive almost immediately, that Miss Frampton was a woman of much vanity and pretension, and that she was in the habit of talking with great exaggeration; and in a short time she more than suspected that many of her assertions were arrant falsehoods—a fact that was well known to all those numerous persons that Miss Frampton called her *friends.*

Tea was now brought in, and Miss Frampton took occasion to relate in what manner she had discovered that the famous silver urn of that charming family, the Sam Kettlethorps, was, in reality, only plated—that her particular favourites, the Joe Sowerbys, showed such bad taste at their great terrapin supper, as to have green hock-glasses for the champaigne; and that those delightful people, the Bob Skutterbys, the first time they attempted the new style of heaters at a venison dinner, had them filled with spirits of turpentine, instead of spirits of wine.

Next morning, Miss Frampton did not appear at the breakfast-table, but had her first meal carried into her room, and Augusta breakfasted with her.

Between them Laura Lovel was discussed at full length, and their conclusion was, that she had not a single good feature—that her complexion was nothing, her figure nothing, and her dress worse than nothing.

"I don't suppose," said Augusta, "that her father has given her much money to bring to town with her."

"To be sure he has not," replied Miss Frampton, "if he is only a poor country clergyman. I think it was in very bad taste for him to let her come at all."

"Well," said Augusta, "we must take her a shopping this morning, and try to get her fitted out, so as to make a decent appearance at Nahant, as we are going thither in a few days."

"Then I have come just in the right time," said Miss Frampton. "Nahant is the very place I wish to visit—my sweet friend Mrs. Dick Pewsey has given me such an account of it. She says there is considerable style there. She passed a week at Nahant when she came to Boston last summer."

"Oh! I remember her," cried Augusta. "She was a mountain of blonde lace."

"Yes," observed Miss Frampton, "and not an inch of that blonde has yet been paid for, or ever will be; I know it from good authority."

They went shopping, and Augusta took them to the most fashionable store in Washington street, where Laura was surprised and confused at the sight of the various beautiful articles shown to them. Even their names perplexed her. She knew very well what gros de Naples was, (or gro de nap, as it is commonly called,) but she was at a loss to distinguish gros de Berlin, gros de Suisse, gros de Zane, and all the other gros. Augusta, however, was au fait to the whole, and talked and flitted, and glided, producing, as she supposed, great effect among the young salesmen at the counters. Miss Frampton examined every thing with a scrutinizing eye, undervalued them all, and took frequent occasions to say that they were far inferior to similar articles in Philadelphia.

At length, a very light-coloured figured silk, with a very new name, was selected for Laura. The price appeared to her extremely high, and when she heard the number of yards that were considered necessary, she faintly asked "if less would not do." Miss Frampton sneered, and Augusta laughed out, saying, "Don't you see that the silk is very narrow, and that it has a wrong side and a right side, and that the flowers have a top and a bottom. So as it cannot be turned every way, a larger quantity will be required."

"Had I not better choose a plain silk," said Laura, "one that is wider, and that *can* be turned any way."

"Oh! plain silks are so common," replied Augusta; "though, for a change, they are well enough. I have four. But this will be best for Nahant. We always dress to go there, and, of course, we expect all of our party to do the same."

"But really this silk is so expensive," whispered Laura.

"Let the dress be cut off," said Miss Frampton, in a peremptory tone. "I am tired of so much hesitation. 'Tis in very bad taste."

The dress *was* cut off, and Laura, on calculating the amount, found that it would make a sad inroad on her little modicum. Being told that she must have also a new printed muslin, one was chosen for her with a beautiful sky blue for the predominant colour, and Laura found that this also was a very costly dress. She was next informed that she could not be presentable without a French pelerine of embroidered muslin. Pelerines in great variety were then produced, and Laura found, to her dismay, that the prices were from ten to twenty-five dollars. She declined taking one, and Miss Frampton and Augusta exchanged looks which said, as plainly as

looks could speak, "I suppose she has not money enough."

Laura coloured—hesitated—at last false pride got the better of her scruples. The salesman commended the beauty of the pelerines; particularly of one tied up in the front, and ornamented on the shoulders with bows of blue riband—and our heroine yielded, and took it at fifteen dollars; those at ten dollars being voted by Miss Frampton "absolutely mean."

After this, Laura was induced to supply herself with silk stockings and white kid gloves, "of a new style," and was also persuaded to give five dollars for a small scarf, also of a new style. And when all these purchases were made, she found that three quarters of a dollar were all that remained in her purse. Augusta also bought several new articles; but Miss Frampton got nothing. However, she insisted afterwards on going into every fancy store in Washington street—not to buy, but "to see what they had," and gave much trouble in causing the salesmen needlessly to display their goods to her, and some offence by making invidious comparisons between their merchandize and that of Philadelphia. By the time all this shopping was over, the clock of the Old South had struck two, and it was found expedient to postpone till next day the intended

visit to the milliner and mantua-maker, Miss Frampton and Augusta declaring that of afternoons they were never fit for any thing but to throw themselves on the bed and go to sleep. Laura Lovel, fatigued both in body and mind, and feeling much dissatisfied with herself, was glad of a respite from the pursuit of finery, though it was only till next morning; and she was almost "at her wit's end" to know in what way she was to pay for having her dress made—much less for the fashionable new bonnet which her companions insisted on her getting—Augusta giving more than hints, that if she went with the family to Nahant, they should expect her "to look like other people;" and Miss Frampton signifying in loud whispers, that "those who were unable to make an appearance, had always better stay at home."

In the evening there were some visitors, none of whom were very entertaining or agreeable, though all the ladies were excessively drest. Laura was reminded of the homely proverb, "Birds of a feather flock together." The chief entertainment was listening to Augusta's music, who considered herself to play and sing with wonderful execution. But to the unpractised ears and eyes of our heroine, it seemed nothing more than an alternate succession of high shrieks and low murmurs, accompanied by

various contortions of the face, sundry bowings and wavings of the body, great elevation of the shoulders and squaring of the elbows, and incessant quivering of the fingers, and throwing back of the hand. Miss Frampton talked all the while in a low voice to a lady that sat next to her, and turned round at intervals to assure Augusta that her singing was divine, and that she reminded her of Madame Fearon.

Augusta had just finished a very great song, and was turning over her music-books in search of another, when a slight ring was heard at the street door, and as William opened it, a weak, hesitating voice inquired for Miss Laura Lovel, adding, "I hope to be excused. I know I ought not to make so free; but I heard this afternoon that Miss Laura, eldest daughter of the Reverend Edward Lovel of Rosebrook, Massachusetts, is now in this house, and I have walked five miles into town, for the purpose of seeing the young lady. However, I ought not to consider the walk as any thing, and it was improper in me to speak of it at all. The young lady is an old friend of mine, if I may be so bold as to say so."

"There's company in the parlour," said William, in a tone not over respectful—"very particular company."

"I won't meddle with any of the company," proceeded the voice. "I am very careful never to make myself disagreeable. But I just wish (if I am not taking too great a liberty) to see Miss Laura Lovel."

"Shall I call her out," said William.

"I would not for the world give her the trouble," replied the stranger. "It is certainly my place to go to the young lady, and not hers to come to me. I always try to be polite. I hope you don't find me unpleasant."

"Miss Lovel," said Miss Frampton, sneeringly, "this must certainly be *your* beau."

The parlour-door being open, the whole of the preceding dialogue had been heard by the company, and Miss Frampton, from the place in which she sat, had a view of the stranger, as he stood in the entry.

William, then, with an unsuppressed grin, ushered into the room a little, thin, weak-looking man, who had a whitish face, and dead light hair, cut straight across his forehead. His dress was scrupulously neat, but very unfashionable. He wore a full suit of yellowish brown cloth, with all the gloss on. His legs were covered with smooth cotton stockings, and he had little silver knee-buckles. His shirt-collar and cravat were stiff and blue, the

latter being tied in front with very long ends, and in his hand he held a blue bandanna handkerchief, carefully folded up. His whole deportment was stiff and awkward.

On entering the room, he bowed very low with a peculiar jerk of the head, and his whole appearance and manner denoted the very acme of humility. The company regarded him with amazement, and Miss Frampton began to whisper, keeping her eye fixed on him all the time. Laura started from her chair, hastened to him, and holding out her hand, addressed him by the name of Pyam Dodge. He took the proffered hand, after a moment of hesitation, and said, "I hope I am properly sensible of your kindness, Miss Laura Lovel, in allowing me to take your hand, now that you are grown. Many a time have I led you to my school, when I boarded at your respected father's, who I trust is well. But now, I would not, on any account, be too familiar."

(Laura pointed to a chair.)

"But which is the mistress of the house? I know perfectly well that it is proper for me to pay my respects to her before I take the liberty of sitting down under her roof. If I may presume to say that I understand any thing thoroughly, it is certainly good manners. In my school, manners were

always perfectly well taught—my own manners, I learnt chiefly from my revered uncle, Deacon Ironskirt, formerly of Wicketiquock, but now of Popsquash."

Laura then introduced Pyam Dodge to the lady of the house, who received him civilly, and then to Mr. Brantley, who, perceiving that the poor schoolmaster was what is called a character, found his curiosity excited to know what he would do next.

This ceremony over, Pyam Dodge bowed round to each of the company separately. Laura saw at once that he was an object of ridicule; and his entire want of tact, and his pitiable simplicity had never before struck her so forcibly. She was glad when, at last, he took a seat beside her, and in a low voice she endeavoured to engage him in a conversation that should prevent him from talking to any one else. She found that he was master of a district school about five miles from Boston, and that he was perfectly contented—for more than that he had never aspired to be.

But vain were the efforts of our heroine to keep Pyam Dodge to herself, and to prevent him from manifesting his peculiarities to the rest of the company. Perceiving that Augusta had turned round on her music-stool to listen and to look at him, the schoolmaster rose on his feet, and bowing first to the

young lady, and then to her mother, he said, "Madam, I am afraid that I have disturbed the child while striking on her pyano-forty. I would on no account cause any interruption—for that might be making myself disagreeable. On the contrary, it would give me satisfaction for the child to continue her exercise, and I shall esteem it a privilege to hear how she plays her music. I have taught singing myself."

Augusta then, by desire of her mother, commenced a new bravura, which ran somehow thus:

Oh! drop a tear, a tender tear—oh! drop a tear, a tender, tender tear. Oh! drop, oh! drop, oh! dro-o-op a te-en-der te-e-ear—a tender tear—a tear for me—a tear for me; a tender tear for me.

When I, when I, when I-I-I am wand'ring, wand'ring, wand'ring, wand'ring far, far from thee—fa-a-ar, far, far, far from thee—from thee.

For sadness in—for sadness in, my heart, my heart shall reign—shall re-e-e-ign—my hee-e-art—for sa-a-adness in my heart shall reign—shall reign.

Until—until—unti-i-il we fondly, fondly meet again, we fondly meet, we fo-o-ondly me-e-et—until we fondly, fondly, fondly meet—meet, meet, meet again—we meet again.

This song (in which the silliness of the words was increased tenfold by the incessant repetition of

them,) after various alternations of high and low, fast and slow, finished in thunder, Augusta striking the concluding notes with an energy that made the piano tremble.

When the bravura was over, Pyam Dodge, who had stood listening in amazement, looked at Mrs. Brantley, and said, "Madam, your child must doubtless sing that song very well when she gets the right tune."

"The right tune," interrupted Augusta, indignantly.

"The right tune!" echoed Mrs. Brantley and Miss Frampton.

"Yes," said Pyam Dodge, solemnly—"and the right words also. For what I have just heard is, of course, neither the regular tune nor the proper words, as they seem to go every how—therefore I conclude that all this wandering and confusion was caused by the presence of strangers: myself in all probability being the greatest stranger, if I may be so bold as to say so. This is doubtless the reason why she mixed up the words at random, and repeated the same so often, and why her actions at the pyano-forty are so strange. I trust that at other times she plays and sings so as to give the proper sense."

Augusta violently shut down the lid of the piano,

and gave her father a look that implied, "Won't you turn him out of the house." But Mr. Brantley was much diverted, and laughed audibly.

Pyam Dodge surveyed himself from head to foot, ascertained that his knee-buckles were fast, and his cravat not untied, and finding all his clothes in complete order, he said, looking round to the company, "I hope there is nothing ridiculous about me—it is my endeavour to appear as well as possible; but the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong."

"Upon my word," said Miss Frampton, leaning across the centre-table to Mrs. Brantley, "your protegée seems to have a strange taste in her acquaintances. However, that is always the case with people who have never been in society, as my friend Mrs. Tom Spradlington justly remarks."

A waiter with refreshments was now brought in, and handed round to the company. When it came to Pyam Dodge, he rose on his feet and thanked the man for handing it to him—then taking the smallest possible quantity of each of the different articles, he put all on the same plate, and unfolding his blue bandanna, he spread it carefully and smoothly over his knees, and commenced eating with the smallest possible mouthfuls, praising every thing as he tasted it. The wine being offered to him, he respectfully

declined it, signifying that he belonged to the Temperance Society. But he afterwards took a glass of lemonade, on being assured that it was not punch, and again rising on his feet, he drank the health of each of the company separately, and not knowing their names, he designated them as, the lady in the blue gown, the lady in the white gown, the gentleman in the black coat, &c.

This ceremony over, Pyam Dodge took out an old-fashioned silver watch, of a shape almost globular, and looking at the hour, he made many apologies for going away so soon, having five miles to walk, and requested that his departure might not break up the company. He then bowed all round again—told Laura he would thank her for her hand, which on her giving him, he shook high and awkwardly, walked backwards to the door and ran against it, trusted he had made himself agreeable, and at last departed.

The front-door had scarcely closed after him, when a general laugh took place, which even Laura could scarcely refrain from joining in.

"Upon my word, Miss Lovel," said Augusta, "this friend of yours is the most peculiar person I ever beheld."

"I never saw a man in worse taste," remarked Miss Frampton.

In a moment another ring was heard at the door, and on its being opened, Pyam Dodge again made his appearance in the parlour, to beg pardon of the lady of the house for not having returned thanks for his entertainment, and also to the *young* lady for her music, which, he said, "was, doubtless, well meant." He then repeated his bows and withdrew.

"What an intolerable fool!" exclaimed Augusta.

"Indeed," replied Laura Lovel, "he is, after all, not deficient in understanding, though his total want of tact, and his entire ignorance of the customs of the world, give an absurdity to his manner, which I confess it is difficult to witness without a smile. I have heard my father say that Pyam Dodge is one of the best classical scholars he ever knew, and he is certainly a man of good feelings, and of irreproachable character."

"I never knew a bore that was not," remarked Miss Frampton.

There was again a ring at the door, and again Pyam Dodge was ushered in. His business now was to inform Miss Laura Lovel, that if she did not see him every day during her residence in Boston, she must not impute the infrequency of his visits to any disrespect on his part, but rather to his close confinement to the duties of his school—besides which, his leisure time was much occupied in study-

ing Arabic; but he hoped to make his arrangements so as to be able to come to town and spend at least three evenings with her every week.

At this intimation there were such evident tokens of disapproval, on the part of the Brantley family and Miss Frampton, and of embarrassment on that of Laura, that poor Pyam Dodge, obtuse as he was to the things of this world, saw that the announcement of his visits was not perfectly well received. He looked amazed at this discovery, but bowed lower than ever, hoped he was not disgusting, and again retreated.

Once more was heard at the door the faint ring that announced the schoolmaster. "Assuredly," observed a gentleman present, "this must be the original Return Strong."

This time, however, poor Pyam Dodge did not venture into the parlour, but was heard meekly to inquire of the servant, if he had not dropped his handkerchief in the hall. The handkerchief was picked up, and he finally departed, humbly hoping "that the gentleman attending the door, had not found him troublesome." The moment that he was gone, the gentleman that attended the door was heard audibly to put up the dead-latch.

Next day Augusta Brantley gave a standing order to the servants, that whenever Miss Lovel's

schoolmaster came, he was to be told that the whole family were out of town.

In the morning, Laura was conveyed by Augusta and Miss Frampton to the mantua-maker's, and Miss Boxpleat demurred a long time about undertaking the two dresses, and longer still about finishing them that week, in consequence of the vast quantity of work she had now on hand. Finally she consented, assuring Laura Lovel that she only did so to oblige Miss Brantley.

Laura then asked what would be her charge for making the dresses. Miss Boxpleat reddened, and vouchsafed no reply; Miss Frampton laughed out, and Augusta twitched Laura's sleeve, who wondered what faux pas she had committed, till she learnt in a whisper that it was an affront to the dress-maker to attempt a bargain with her beforehand, and our heroine, much disconcerted, passively allowed herself to be fitted for the dresses.

Laura had a very pretty bonnet of the finest and whitest split straw, modestly trimmed with broad white satin riband; but her companions told her that there was no existing without a dress-hat, and she was accordingly carried to Miss Pipingcord's. Here they found that all the handsomest articles of this description were already engaged, but they made her bespeak one of a very expensive silk,

trimmed with flowers and gauze riband, and when she objected to the front, as exposing her whole face to the summer sun, she was told that of course she must have a blonde gauze veil. "We will stop at Whitaker's," said Augusta, "and see his assortment, and you can make the purchase at once." Laura knew that she could not, and steadily persisted in her refusal, saying that she must depend on her parasol for screening her face.

Several other superfluities were pressed upon our poor heroine, as they proceeded along Washington street, Augusta really thinking it indispensable to be fashionably and expensively drest, and Miss Frampton feeling a malignant pleasure in observing how much these importunities confused and distressed her.

Laura sat down to dinner with an aching head, and no appetite, and afterwards retired to her room, and endeavoured to allay her uneasiness with a book.

"So," said Miss Frampton to Mrs. Brantley, "this is the girl that dear Augusta tells me you think of inviting to pass the winter with you."

"Why, is she not very pretty?" replied Mrs. Brantley.

"Not in my eye," answered Miss Frampton. "Wait but two years, till my sweet Augusta is old enough, and tall enough to come out, and you will

have no occasion to invite beauties, for the purpose of drawing company to your house—for, of course, I cannot but understand the motive; and pray how can the father of this girl enable her to make a proper appearance? When she has got through the two new dresses that we had so much difficulty in persuading her to venture upon, is she to return to her black marcelline?—You certainly do not intend to wrong your own child by going to the expense of dressing out this parson's daughter yourself. And, after all, these green young girls do not draw company half so well as ladies a few years older—decided women of ton, who are familiar with the whole routine of society, and have the veritable air distingúe. One of that description would do more for your soirées, next winter, than twenty of these village beauties."

Next day our heroine's new bonnet came home, accompanied by a bill of twelve dollars. She had supposed that the price would not exceed seven or eight. She had not the money, and her embarrassment was increased by Miss Frampton's examining the bill, and reminding her that there was a receipt to it. Laura's confusion was so palpable, that Mrs. Brantley felt some compassion for her, and said to the milliner's girl, "The young lady will call at Miss Pipingcord's, and pay for her

hat." And the girl departed, first asking to have the bill returned to her, as it was receipted.

When our heroine and her companions were out next morning, they passed by the milliner's, and Laura instinctively turned away her head. "You can now call at Miss Pipingcord's and pay her bill," said Miss Frampton. "It is here that she lives—don't you see her name on the door?"

"I have not the money about me," said Laura, in a faultering voice—"I have left my purse at home." This was her first attempt at a subterfuge, and conscience-struck, she could not say another word during the walk.

On the last day of the week, her dresses were sent home, with a bill of ten dollars and a half for making the two, including what are called the trimmings, all of which were charged at about four times their real cost. Laura was more confounded than ever. Neither Mrs. Brantley nor Augusta happened to be present, but Miss Frampton was, and understood it all. "Cant't you tell the girl you will call and settle Miss Boxpleat's bill," said she. "Don't look so confused"—adding in a somewhat lower voice, "she will suspect you have no money to pay with—really your behaviour is in very bad taste."

Laura's lip quivered, and her cheek grew pale. Miss Frampton could scarcely help laughing, to see

her so new to the world, and at last deigned to relieve her by telling Miss Boxpleat's girl that Miss Lovel would call and settle the bill.

The girl was scarcely out of the room, when poor Laura, unable to restrain herself another moment, hid her face against one of the cushions of the ottoman, and burst into tears. The flinty heart of Miss Frampton underwent a momentary softening. She looked awhile in silence at Laura, and then said to her, "Why, you seem to take this very much to heart."

"No wonder," replied Laura, sobbing—"I have expended all my money; all that my father gave me at my departure from home. At least I have only the merest trifle left; and how am I to pay either the milliner's bill or the mantua-maker's?"

Miss Frampton deliberated for a few moments, walked to the window, and stood there awhile—then approached the still weeping Laura, and said to her, "what would you say if a friend was to come forward to relieve you from this embarrassment?"

"I have no friend," replied Laura in a half-choked voice—"at least none here. Oh! how I wish that I had never left home!"

Miss Frampton paused again, and finally offered Laura the loan of twenty-five dollars, till she could get money from her father. "I know not," said

Laura, "how I can ask my father so soon for any more money. I am convinced that he gave me all he could possibly spare. I have done very wrong in allowing myself to incur expenses which I am unable to meet. I can never forgive myself. Oh! how miserable I am!" And she again covered her face and cried bitterly.

Miss Frampton hesitated—but she had heard Mr. Brantley speak of Mr. Lovel as a man of the strictest integrity, and she was certain that he would strain every nerve, and redouble the economy of his family expenditure, rather than allow his daughter to remain long under pecuniary obligations to a stranger. She felt that she ran no risk in taking from her pocket-book notes to the amount of twenty-five dollars, and putting them into the hands of Laura, who had thought at one time of applying to Mr. Brantley for the loan of a sufficient sum to help her out of her present difficulties, but was deterred by a feeling of invincible repugnance to taxing any farther the kindness of her host, conceiving herself already under sufficient obligations to him as his guest, and a partaker of his hospitality. However, had she known more of the world and had a greater insight into the varieties of the human character, she would have infinitely preferred throwing herself on the generosity of Mr. Brantley, to becoming the debtor

of Miss Frampton. As it was, she gratefully accepted the proffered kindness of that lady, feeling it a respite. Drying her tears, she immediately equipped herself for walking, hastened both to the milliner and the mantua-maker, and paying their bills, she returned home with a lightened heart.

Laura Lovel had already begun to find her visit to the Brantley family less agreeable than she had anticipated. They had nothing in common with herself; their conversation was neither edifying nor entertaining. They had few books, except the Annuals; and though she passed the Circulating Libraries with longing eyes, she did not consider that she was sufficiently in funds to avail herself of their contents. No opportunities were offered her of seeing any of the lions of the city, and of those that casually fell in her way, she found her companions generally more ignorant than herself. They did not conceive that a stranger could be amused or interested with things that, having always been within their own reach, had failed to awaken in *them* the slightest curiosity. Mr. Brantley was infinitely the best of the family; but he was immersed in business all day, and in the newspapers all the evening. Mrs. Brantley was nothing, and Augusta's petulance and heartlessness, and Miss Frampton's impertinence, (which somewhat increased after she lent the money to

Laura,) were equally annoying. The visitors of the family were nearly of the same stamp as themselves.

Laura, however, had looked forward with much anticipated pleasure to the long-talked-of visit to the sea shore, and in the mean time her chief enjoyment was derived from the afternoon rides that were occasionally taken in Mr. Brantley's carriage, and which gave our heroine an opportunity of seeing something of the beautiful environs of Boston.

Miss Frampton's fits of kindness were always very transient, and Laura's deep mortification at having been necessitated to accept a favour from such a woman, was rendered still more poignant by unavoidably overhearing (as she was dressing at her toilet-table that stood between two open windows,) the following dialogue; the speakers being two of Mrs. Brantley's servant girls that were ironing in the kitchen porch, and who in talking to each other of the young ladies, always dropped the title of Miss:

"Matilda," said one of them, "don't you hear Laura's bell? Didn't she tell you arter dinner, that she would ring for you arter a while, to come up stairs and hook the back of her dress."

"Yes," replied Matilda—"I hear it as plain as you do, Eliza; but I guess I shan't go till it suits me. I'm quite beat out with running up stairs from morning to night to wait on that there Philadelphy

woman, as she takes such high airs. Who but she indeed! Any how, I'm not a going to hurry. I shall just act as if I did not hear no bell at all—for as to this here Laura, I guess she an't much. Augusta told me this morning, when she got me to fix her hair, that Miss Frampton told her that Laura axed and begged her, amost on her bare knees, to lend her some money to pay for her frocks and bunnet."

"Why, how could she act so!" exclaimed Eliza.

"Because," resumed Matilda, "her people sent her here without a copper in her pocket. So I guess they're a pretty shabby set, after all."

"I was judging as much," said Eliza, "by her not taking no airs, and always acting so polite to every body."

"Well now," observed Matilda, "Mr. Scourbrass, the gentleman as lives with old Madam Montgomery, at the big house, in Bowdin Square, and helps to do her work, always stands out that very great people of the rale sort, act much better, and an't so apt to take airs as them what are upstarts."

"Doctors differ," sagely remarked Eliza. "However, as you say, I don't believe this here Laura *is* much; and I'm thinking how she'll get along at Nahant. Miss Lathersoap, the lady as washes her clothes, told me, among other things, that Laura's pocket-handkerchers are all quite plain—not a work-

ed or a laced one among them. Now our Augusta would scorn to carry a plain handkercher, and so would her mother."

"I've taken notice of Laura's handkerchers myself," said Matilda, "and I dont see why we young ladies as lives out, and does people's work to oblige them, should be expected to run at the beck and call of any strangers they may chuse to take into the house; let alone when they're not no great things."

Laura retreated from the open windows, that she might hear no more of a conversation so painful to her. She would at once have written to her father, told him all, and begged him, if he possibly could, to send her money enough to repay Miss Frampton, but she had found by a letter received the day before, that he had gone on some business to the interior of Maine, and would not be home in less than a fortnight.

Next day was the one finally appointed for their removal to Nahant, and our heroine felt her spirits revive at the idea of beholding for the first time in her life, "the sea, the sea, the open sea." They went in Mr. Brantley's carriage, and Laura understood that she *might* ride in her black silk dress, and her straw bonnet.

They crossed at the Winnisimmet Ferry, rode through Chelsea, and soon arrived at the flourishing

town of Lynn, where every man was making shoes, and every woman binding them. The last sunbeams were glowing in the west, when they came to the beautiful Long Beach that connects the rocks of Lynn with those of Nahant, the sand being so firm and smooth, that the shadow of every object is reflected in it downwards. The tide was so high that they drove along the verge of the surf, the horses' feet splashing through the water, and trampling on the shells and sea-weed left by the retiring waves. Cattle, as they went home, were cooling themselves by wading breast high in the breakers; and the little sand-birds were sporting on the crests of the billows, sometimes flying low and dipping into the water the white edges of their wings, and sometimes seeming with their slender feet to walk on the surface of the foam. Beyond the everlasting breakers rolled the unbounded ocean, the haze of evening coming fast upon it, and the full moon rising broad and red through the misty veil of the eastern horizon.

Laura Lovel felt as if she could have viewed this scene for ever, and at times she could not refrain from audibly expressing her delight. The other ladies were deeply engaged in listening to Miss Frampton's account of a ball and supper given by her intimate friend, that lovely woman, Mrs. Ben

Derrydown, the evening before Mr. Ben Derrydown's last failure, and which ball and supper exceeded in splendour any thing she had ever witnessed, except the wedding-party of her sweet love Mrs. Nick Rearsby, whose furniture was seized by the sheriff a few months after; and the birth-night concert at the coming out of her darling little pet, Kate Bolderhurst, who ran away next morning with her music-master.

Our party now arrived at the Nahant Hotel, which was full of visitors, with some of whom the Brantleys were acquainted. After tea, when the company adjourned to the lower drawing-rooms, the extraordinary beauty of Laura Lovel drew the majority of the gentlemen to that side of the apartment on which the Brantley family were seated. Many introductions took place, and Mrs. Brantley felt in paradise at seeing that *her* party had attracted the greatest number of beaux. Miss Frampton generally made a point of answering every thing that was addressed to Laura, and Augusta glided and flitted, and chattered much impertinent nonsense to the gentlemen on the outskirts of the group, that were waiting for an opportunity of saying something to Miss Lovel.

Our heroine was much confused at finding herself

an object of such general attention, and was also overwhelmed by the officious volubility of Miss Frampton, though none of it was addressed to her. Mrs. Maitland, a lady as unlike Mrs. Brantley as possible, was seated on the other side of Laura Lovel, and was at once prepossessed in her favour, not only from the beauty of her features, but from the intelligence of her countenance. Desirous of being better acquainted, and seeing that Laura's present position was any thing but pleasant to her, Mrs. Maitland proposed that they should take a turn in the veranda that runs round the second story of the hotel. To this suggestion Laura gladly assented—for she felt at once that Mrs. Maitland was just the sort of woman she would like to know. There was a refinement and dignity in her appearance and manner that showed her to be "every inch a lady;" but that dignity was tempered with a frankness and courtesy that put every one round her immediately at their ease. Though now in the autumn of life, her figure was still good—her features still handsome, but they derived their chief charm from the sensible and benevolent expression of her fine open countenance. Her attire was admirably suited to her face and person; but she was not over-drest, and she was evidently one of those fortunate women

who, without bestowing much time and attention upon it, are au fait to all that constitutes a correct and tasteful costume.

Mrs. Maitland took Laura's arm within hers, and telling Mrs. Brantley that she was going to carry off Miss Lovel for half an hour, she made a sign to a fine-looking young man on the other side of the room, and introduced him as her son, Mr. Aubrey Maitland. He conducted the two ladies up stairs to the veranda, and in a few minutes our heroine felt as if she had been acquainted with the Maitlands for years. No longer kept down and oppressed by the night-mare influence of fools, her spirit expanded, and breathed once more. She expressed, without hesitation, her delight at the scene that presented itself before her—for she felt that she was understood.

The moon, now "high in heaven," threw a solemn light on the trembling expanse of the ocean, and glittered on the spray that foamed and murmured for ever round the rocks that environed the little peninsula, their deep recesses slumbering in shade, while their crags and points came out in silver brightness. Around lay the numerous islands that are scattered over Boston harbour, and far apart glowed the fires of two light-houses, like immense stars beaming on the verge of the horizon; one of

them, a revolving light, alternately shining out, and disappearing. As a contrast to the still repose that reigned around, was the billiard-room, (resembling a little Grecian temple,) on a promontory that overlooked the sea—the lamps that shone through its windows, mingling with the moonbeams, and the rolling sound of the billiard-balls uniting with the murmur of the eternal waters.

Mrs. Maitland listened with corresponding interest to the animated and original comments of her new friend, whose young and enthusiastic imagination had never been more vividly excited; and she drew her out, till Laura suddenly stopped, blushing with the fear that she had been saying too much. Before they returned to the drawing-room, Aubrey was decidedly and deeply in love.

When Laura retired to her apartment, she left the window open, that she might from her pillow look out upon the moonlight-sea, and be fanned by the cool night breeze that gently rippled its waters; and when she was at last lulled to repose by the monotonous dashing of the surf against the rocks beneath her casement, she had a dream of the peninsula of Nahant—not as it now is, covered with new and tasteful buildings, and a favourite resort of the fashion and opulence of Boston, but as it must have looked two centuries ago, when the seals made their

homes among its caverned rocks, and when the only human habitations were the rude huts of the Indian fishers, and the only boats their canoes of bark and skins.

When she awoke from her dream she saw the morning-star sparkling high in the east, and casting on the dark surface of the sea a line of light which seemed to mimic that of the moon, long since gone down beyond the opposite horizon. Laura rose at the earliest glimpse of dawn to watch the approaches of the coming day. A hazy vapour had spread itself over the water, and through its gauzy veil she first beheld the red rim of the rising sun, seeming to emerge from its ocean bed. As the sun ascended, the mist slowly rolled away, and "the light of morning smiled upon the wave," and tinted the white sails of a little fleet of outward-bound fishing-boats.

At the breakfast-table the majority of the company consisted of ladies only: most of the gentlemen (including Aubrey Maitland) having gone in the early steamboat to attend to their business in the city. After breakfast, Laura proposed a walk, and Augusta and Miss Frampton, not knowing what else to do with themselves, consented to accompany her. A certain Miss Blunsdon, (who being an heiress, and of a patrician family, conceived herself privileged to do as she pleased, and therefore made it

her pleasure to be a hoyden and a slattern,) volunteered to pioneer them, boasting of her intimate knowledge of every nook and corner of the neighbourhood. Our heroine, by particular desire of Augusta and Miss Frampton, had arrayed herself that morning in her new French muslin, with what they called its proper accompaniments.

Miss Blunsdon conducted the party to that singular cleft in the rocks, known by the name of the Swallow's Cave, in consequence of its having been formerly the resort of those birds, whose nests covered its walls. Miss Frampton stopped as soon as they came in sight of it, declaring that it was in bad taste for ladies to scramble about such rugged places, and Augusta agreeing that a fancy for wet, slippery rocks was certainly very peculiar. So the two friends sat down on the most level spot they could find, while Miss Blunsdon insisted on Laura's following her to the utmost extent of the cave, and our heroine's desire to explore this wild and picturesque recess, made her forgetful of the probable consequences to her dress.

Miss Blunsdon and Laura descended into the cleft, which as they proceeded, became so narrow as almost to close above their heads; its lofty and irregular walls seeming to lose themselves in the blue sky. The passage at the bottom was in some places

scarcely wide enough to allow them to squeeze through it. The tide was low, yet still the stepping-stones, loosely imbedded in the sand and sea-weed, were nearly covered with water. But Laura followed her guide to the utmost extent of the passage, till they looked out again upon the sea.

When they rejoined their companions—"Oh! look at your new French muslin," exclaimed Augusta to Laura. "It is draggled half way up to your knees, and the salt water has already taken the colour out of it—and your pelerine is split down the back—and your shoes are half off your feet, and your stockings are all over wet sand. How very peculiar you look!"

Laura was now extremely sorry to find her dress so much injured, and Miss Frampton comforted her by the assurance that it would never again be fit to be seen. They returned to the hotel, where they found Mrs. Maitland reading on one of the sofas in the upper hall. Laura was hastily running up stairs, but Augusta called out—"Mrs. Maitland do look at Miss Lovel—did you ever see such a figure? She has demolished her new dress, scrambling through the Swallow's Cave with Miss Blunsdon." And she ran into the ladies' drawing-room to repeat the story at full length, while Laura retired to her room to try some means of remedying her disasters, and

to regret that she had not been permitted to bring with her to Nahant some of her gingham morning dresses. The French muslin, however, was incurable; its blue, though very beautiful, being of that peculiar cast which always fades into a dull white when wet with water.

Miss Frampton remained a while in the hall: and taking her seat beside Mrs. Maitland, said to her in a low confidential voice—"Have you not observed, Mrs. Maitland, that when people, who are nobody, attempt dress, they always overdo it. Only think of a country clergyman's daughter coming to breakfast in so expensive a French muslin, and then going out in it to clamber about the rocks, and paddle among the wet sea-weed. Now you will see what a show she will make at dinner in a dress, the cost of which would keep her whole family in comfortable calico gowns for two years. I was with her when she did her shopping, and though, as a friend, I could not forbear entreating her to get things that were suitable to her circumstances and to her station in life, she turned a deaf ear to every thing I said, (which was certainly in very bad taste,) and she would buy nothing but the most expensive and useless frippery. I suppose she expects to catch the beaux by it. But when they find out who she is, I rather think they will only nibble at the bait—Hea-

vens! what a wife she will make! And then such a want of self-respect, and even of common integrity. Of course you will not mention it—for I would on no consideration that it should go any farther—but between ourselves, I was actually obliged to lend her money to pay her bills."

Mrs. Maitland, thoroughly disgusted with her companion, and disbelieving the whole of her gratuitous communication, rose from the sofa and departed without vouchsafing a reply.

At dinner, Laura Lovel appeared in her new silk, and really looked beautifully. Miss Frampton observing that our heroine attracted the attention of several gentlemen who had just arrived from the city, took an opportunity, while she was receiving a plate of chowder from one of the waiters, to spill part of it on Laura's dress.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Lovel," said she; "when I took the soup I did not perceive that you and your new silk were beside me."

Laura began to wipe her dress with her pocket-handkerchief. "Now don't look so disconcerted," pursued Miss Frampton, in a loud whisper. "It is in very bad taste to appear annoyed when an accident happens to your dress. People in society always pass off such things, as of no consequence

whatever. I have apologized for spilling the soup, and what more can I do?"

Poor Laura was not in *society*, and she knew that to *her* the accident *was* of consequence. However, she rallied, and tried to appear as if she thought no more of the mischance that had spoiled the handsomest and most expensive dress she had ever possessed. After dinner she tried to remove the immense grease-spot by every application within her reach, but had no success.

When she returned to the drawing-room, she was invited to join a party that was going to visit the Spouting Horn, as it is generally denominated. She had heard this remarkable place much talked of since her arrival at Nahant, and she certainly felt a great desire to see it. Mrs. Maitland had letters to write, and Mrs. Brantley and Miss Frampton were engaged in their siesta; but Augusta was eager for the walk, as she found that several gentlemen were going, among them Aubrey Maitland, who had just arrived in the afternoon boat. His eyes sparkled at the sight of our heroine, and offering her his arm, they proceeded with the rest of the party to the Spouting Horn. This is a deep cavity at the bottom of a steep ledge of rocks, and the waves, as they rush successively into it with the tide, are imme

diately thrown out again by the action of a current of air which comes through a small opening at the back of the recess, the spray falling round like that of a casçade or fountain. The tide and wind were both high, and Laura was told that the Spouting Horn would be seen to great advantage.

Aubrey Maitland conducted her carefully down the least rugged declivity of the rock, and gave her his hand to assist her in springing from point to point. They at length descended to the bottom of the crag. Laura was bending forward with eager curiosity, and looking stedfastly into the wave-worn cavern, much interested in the explosions of foaming water, which were sometimes greater and sometimes less. Suddenly a blast of wind twisted her light dress-bonnet completely round, and broke the sewing of one of the strings, and the bonnet was directly whirled before her into the cavity of the rock, and the next moment thrown back again amidst a shower of sea-froth. Laura cried out involuntarily, and Aubrey sprung forward, and snatched it out of the water.

"I fear," said he, "Miss Lovel, your bonnet is irreparably injured." "It is, indeed," replied Laura; and remembering Miss Frampton's lecture, she tried to say that the destruction of her bonnet

was of no consequence, but unaccustomed to falsehood, the words died away on her lips.

The ladies now gathered round our heroine, who held in her hand the dripping wreck of the once elegant bonnet; and they gave it as their unanimous opinion, that nothing could possibly be done to restore it to any form that would make it wearable. Laura then tied her scarf over her head, and Aubrey Maitland thought she looked prettier than ever.

Late in the evening, Mr. Brantley arrived from town in his chaise, bringing from the post-office a letter for Laura Lovel, from her little sisters, or rather two letters written on the same sheet. They ran thus:—

"*Rosebrook, August 9th,* 18—.

"DEAREST SISTER:—We hope you are having a great deal of pleasure in Boston. How many novels you must be reading—I wish I was grown up as you are—I am eight years old, and I have never yet read a novel. We miss you all the time. There is still a chair placed for you at table, and Rosa and I take turns in sitting next to it. But we can no longer hear your pleasant talk with our dear father. You know Rosa and I always listened so attentively that we frequently forgot to eat our dinners. I see

advertised a large new book of Fairy Tales. How much you will have to tell us when you come home. Since you were so kind as to promise to bring me a book, I think, upon second thought, I would rather have the Tales of the Castle than Miss Edgeworth's Moral Tales.

"Dear mother now has to make all the pies and puddings herself. We miss you every way. The Children's Friend must be a charming book—so must the Friend of Youth.

"Yesterday we had a pair of fowls killed for dinner. Of course they were not Rosa's chickens, nor mine—they were only Billy and Bobby But still, Rosa and I cried very much, as they were fowls that we were acquainted with. Dear father reasoned with us about it for a long time; but still, though the fowls were made into a pie, we could eat nothing but the crust. I think I should like very much to read the Robins, and also Keeper's Travels in Search of his Master.

"I hope, dear Laura, you will be able to remember every thing you have seen and heard in Boston, that you may have the more to tell us when you come home. I think, after all, there is no book I would prefer to the Arabian Nights—no doubt the Tales of the Genii are also excellent. Dear Laura,

how I long to see you again. Paul and Virginia must be very delightful.

"Yours affectionately,

"ELLA LOVEL."

"DEAR SISTER LAURA—I cried for a long time after you left us, but at last I wiped my eyes, and played with Ponto, and was happy. I have concluded not to want the canary-bird I asked you to get for me, as I think it best to be satisfied by hearing the birds sing on the trees, in the garden, and in the woods. Last night I heard a screech-owl—I would rather have a young fig-tree in a tub—or else a great quantity of new flower-seeds. If you do not get either the fig-tree or the flower-seeds, I should like a blue cat, such as I have read of: you know those cats are not sky-blue, but only a bluish gray. If a blue cat is not to be had, I should be glad of a pair of white English rabbits; and yet, I think I would quite as willingly have a pair of doves. I never saw a real dove; but if doves are scarce, or cost too much, I shall be satisfied with a pair of fan-tailed pigeons, if they are quite white, and their tails fan very much. If you had a great deal of money to spare, I should like a kid or a fawn, but I know that is impossible; so I will not

think of it. Perhaps, when I grow up, I may be a president's wife; if so, I will buy an elephant.

"Your affectionate sister,

"ROSA LOVEL."

"I send kisses to all the people in Boston that love you."

How gladly would Laura, had it been in her power, have made every purchase mentioned in the letters of the two innocent little girls. And her heart swelled and her eyes overflowed, when she thought how happy she might have made them at a small part of the expense she had been persuaded to lavish on the finery that had given her so little pleasure, and that was now nearly all spoiled.

Next day was Sunday; and they went to church and heard Mr. Taylor, the celebrated mariner clergyman, with whose deep pathos and simple good sense Laura was much interested, while she was at the same time amused with his originality and quaintness.

On returning to the hotel, they found that the morning boat had arrived, and on looking up at the veranda, the first object Laura saw there was Pyam Dodge, standing stiffly with his hands on the railing.

"Miss Lovel," said Augusta, "there 's your friend, the schoolmaster."

"Mercy upon us," screamed Miss Frampton, "has that horrid follow come after you? Really, Miss Lovel, it was in very bad taste to invite him to Nahant."

"I did not invite him," replied Laura, colouring; "I know not how he discovered that I was here."

"The only way, then," said Miss Frampton, "is to cut him dead, and then perhaps he 'll clear off."

"Pho," said Augusta, "do you suppose he can understand cutting; why he won't know whether he 's cut or not."

"May I ask who this person is?" said Aubrey Maitland, in a low voice, to Laura. "Is there any stain or any suspicion attached to him?"

"Oh! no, indeed," replied Laura, earnestly. And, in a few words, as they ascended the stairs, she gave him an outline of the schoolmaster and his character.

"Then do not cut him at all," said Aubrey. "Let me take the liberty of suggesting to you how to receive him." They had now come out into the veranda, and Maitland immediately led Laura up to Pyam Dodge, who bowed profoundly on being introduced to him, and then turned to our heroine, asked permission to shake hands with her, hoped his company would be found agreeable, and signified that he had been unable to learn where she was from Mr. Brantley's servants; but that the evening

before, a gentleman of Boston had told him that Mr. Brantley and all the family were at Nahant. Therefore, he had come thither to-day purposely to see her, and to inform her that the summer vacation having commenced, he was going to pay a visit to his old friends at Rosebrook, and would be very thankful if she would honour him with a letter or message to her family.

All this was said with much bowing, and prosing, and apologizing. When it was finished, Maitland invited Pyam Dodge to take a turn round the veranda, with Miss Lovel and himself, and the poor schoolmaster expressed the most profound gratitude. When they were going to dinner, Aubrey introduced him to Mrs. Maitland, placed him next to himself at table, and engaged him in a conversation on the Greek classics, in which Pyam Dodge, finding himself precisely in his element, forgot his humility, and being less embarrassed, was therefore less awkward and absurd than usual.

Laura Lovel had thought Aubrey Maitland the handsomest and most elegant young man she had ever seen. She now thought him the most amiable.

In the afternoon there was a mirage, in which the far-off rocks in the vicinity of Marblehead appeared almost in the immediate neighbourhood of Nahant,

forgive me for calling you so,) why should you be at any loss for money, when I have just received my quarter's salary, and when I have more about me than I know what to do with. I heard you mention twenty-five dollars—here it is, (taking some notes out of an enormous pocket-book,) and if you want any more, as I hope you do—"

"Oh! no, indeed—no," interrupted Laura. "I cannot take it; I would not on any consideration."

"I know too well," continued Pyam Dodge, "I am not worthy to offer it, and I hope I am not making myself disagreeable. But if, Miss Laura Lovel, you would only have the goodness to accept it, you may be sure I will never ask you for it as long as I live. I would even take a book-oath not to do so."

Laura steadily refused the proffered kindness of the poor schoolmaster, and begged Pyam Dodge to mention the subject to her no more. She told him that all she now wished was to go home, and that she would write by him to her family, begging that her father would come for her (as he had promised at parting) and take her back to Rosebrook, as soon as he could. She quitted Pyam Dodge, who was evidently much mortified, and retired to write her letter, which she gave to him as soon as it was finished, finding him in the hall taking a ceremoni-

ous leave of the Maitlands. He departed, and Laura's spirits were gradually revived during the evening, by the gratifying attentions and agreeable conversation of Mrs. Maitland and her son.

When our heroine retired for the night, she found on her table a letter in a singularly uncouth hand, if hand it could be called, where every word was differently written. It inclosed two ten dollar notes and a five, and was conceived in the following words:

"This is to inform Miss Laura, eldest daughter of the Reverend Edward Lovel, of Rosebrook, Massachusetts, that an unknown friend of hers, whose name it will be impossible for her to guess (and therefore to make the attempt will doubtless be entire loss of time, and time is always precious), having accidentally heard (though by what means is a profound secret) that she, at this present time, is in some little difficulty for want of a small sum of money, he, therefore, this unknown friend, offers to her acceptance the before-mentioned sum, hoping that she will find nothing disgusting in his using so great a liberty."

"Oh! poor Pyam Dodge!" exclaimed Laura, "why did you take the trouble to disguise and disfigure your excellent hand-writing." And she felt,

after all, what a relief it was to transfer her debt from Miss Frampton to the good schoolmaster. Reluctant to have any further personal discussion on this painful subject, she inclosed the notes in a short billet to Miss Frampton, and sent it immediately to that lady's apartment. She then went to bed, comparatively happy, slept soundly, and dreamed of Aubrey Maitland.

About the end of the week, Laura Lovel was delighted to see her father arrive with Mr. Brantley. As soon as they were alone, she threw herself into his arms, and with a flood of tears explained to him the particulars of all that passed since she left home, and deeply lamented that she had allowed herself to be drawn into expenses beyond her means of defraying, and which her father could ill afford to supply, to say nothing of the pain and mortification they had occasioned to herself.

"My beloved child," said Mr. Lovel, "I have been much to blame for entrusting you at an age so early and inexperienced, and with no knowledge of a town-life and its habits, to the guidance and example of a family of whom I knew nothing, except that they were reputable and opulent."

Mr. Lovel then gave his daughter the agreeable intelligence, that the tract of land which was the

object of his visit to Maine, and which had been left him in his youth by an old aunt, and was then considered of little or no account, had greatly increased in value. by a new and flourishing town having sprung up in its immediate vicinity. This tract he had recently been able to sell for ten thousand dollars, and the interest of that sum would now make a most acceptable addition to his little income.

He also informed her that Pyam Dodge was then at the village of Rosebrook, where he was "visiting round," as he called it, and that the good schoolmaster had faithfully kept the secret of the twenty-five dollars which he had pressed upon Laura, and which Mr. Lovel had now heard, for the first time, from herself.

While this conversation was going on between the father and daughter, Mrs. Maitland and her son were engaged in discussing the beauty and the apparent merits of our heroine. "I should like extremely," said Mrs. Maitland, "to invite Miss Lovel to pass the winter with me. But, you know, we live much in the world, and I fear the limited state of her father's finances could not allow her to appear as she would wish. Yet perhaps I might manage to assist her, in that respect, without wounding her delicacy. I think with regret of so fair a

flower being 'born to blush unseen, and waste its sweetness on the desert air.'"

"There is one way," said Aubrey Maitland, smiling and colouring, "by which we might have Miss Lovel to spend next winter in Boston, without any danger of offending her delicacy, or subjecting her to embarrassment on account of her personal expenses—a way which would enable her to appear as she deserves, and to move in a sphere that she is so well calculated to adorn, though not as *Miss Lovel.*"

"I cannot but understand you, Aubrey," replied Mrs. Maitland, who had always been not only the mother, but the sympathizing and confidential friend of her son—"yet be not too precipitate. Know more of this young lady, before you go so far that you cannot in honour recede."

"I know her sufficiently," said Aubrey with animation. "She is to be understood at once, and though I flatter myself that I may have already excited some interest in her heart, yet I have no reason to suppose that she entertains for me such feelings as would induce her at this time to accept my offer. She is extremely anxious to get home; she may have left a lover there. But let me be once assured that her affections are disengaged, and that

she is really inclined to bestow them on me, and a declaration shall immediately follow the discovery. A man who, after being convinced of the regard of the woman he loves, can trifle with her feelings and hesitate about securing her hand, does not deserve to obtain her."

Laura had few preparations to make for her departure, which took place the next morning, Aubrey Maitland and Mr. Brantley accompanying her and her father to town, in the early boat. Mrs. Maitland took leave of her affectionately, Mrs. Brantley smilingly, Augusta coldly, and Miss Frampton not at all.

Mr. Lovel and his daughter passed that day in Boston, staying at a hotel. Laura showed her father the children's letter. All the books that Ella mentioned were purchased for her, and quite a little menagerie of animals was procured for Rosa.

They arrived safely at Rosebrook. And when Mr. Lovel was invoking a blessing on their evening repast, he referred to the return of his daughter, and to his happiness on seeing her once more in her accustomed seat at table, in a manner that drew tears into the eyes of every member of the family.

Pyam Dodge was there, only waiting for Laura's arrival, to set out next morning on a visit to his re-

lations in Vermont. With his usual want of tact, and his usual kindness of heart, he made so many objections to receiving the money with which he had accommodated our heroine, that Mr. Lovel was obliged to slip it privately into his trunk before his departure.

In a few days, Aubrey Maitland came to Rosebrook and established himself at the principal inn, from whence he visited Laura the evening of his arrival. Next day he came both morning and evening. On the third day he paid her three visits, and after that it was not worth while to count them.

The marriage of Aubrey and Laura took place at the close of the autumn, and they immediately went into the possession of an elegant residence of their own, adjoining the mansion of the elder Mrs. Maitland. They are now living in as much happiness as can fall to the lot of human beings.

Before the Nahant season was over, Miss Frampton had quarrelled with or offended nearly every lady at the hotel, and Mr. Brantley privately insisted that his wife should not invite her to pass the winter with them. However, she protracted her stay as long as she possibly could, with any appearance of decency, and then returned to Philadelphia, under

he escort of one of Mr. Brantley's clerks. After she came home, her visit to Boston afforded her a new subject of conversation, in which the predominant features were general ridicule of the Yankees (as she called them), circumstantial slanders of the family to whose hospitality she had been indebted for more than three months, and particular abuse of "that little wretch, Augusta."

JOHN W. ROBERTSON.

A TALE OF A CENT.

Some there be that shadows kiss.—*Shakspeare.*

SELINA MANSEL was only sixteen when she took charge of her father's house and entered on the arduous task of doing as she pleased: provided always that she duly attended to his chief injunction, never to allow herself to incur a debt, however trifling, and to purchase nothing that she could not pay for on the spot. To the observance of this rule, which he had laid down for himself in early life, Mr. Mansel attributed all his success in business, and his ability to retire at the age of fifty with a handsome competence.

Since the death of his wife, Mr. Mansel's sister had presided over his family, and had taken much interest in instructing Selina in what she justly termed the most useful part of a woman's education.

Such was Miss Eleanor Mansel's devotion to her brother and his daughter, that she had hesitated for twelve years about returning an intelligible answer to the love-letters which she received quarterly from Mr. Waitstill Wonderly, a gentleman whose dwelling-place was in the far, far east. Every two years this paragon of patience came in person: his home being at a distance of several hundred miles, and his habits by no means so itinerant as those of the generality of his countrymen.

On his sixth avatar, Miss Mansel consented to reward with her hand the constancy of her inamorato; as Selina had, within the last twelvemonth, made up two pieces of linen for her father, prepared the annual quantity of pickles and preserves, and superintended two house-cleanings, all herself—thus giving proof positive that she was fully competent to succeed her aunt Eleanor as mistress of the establishment.

Selina Mansel was a very good and a very pretty girl. Though living in a large and flourishing provincial town, which we shall denominate Somerford, she had been brought up in comparative retirement, and had scarcely yet begun to go into company, as it is called. Her understanding was naturally excellent; but she was timid, sensitive, easily disconcerted, and likely to appear to consid-

erable disadvantage in any situation that was the least embarrassing.

About two months after the departure of Mr. and Mrs. Wonderly, the whole borough of Somerford was thrown into commotion by the unexpected arrival of an old townsman, who had made his fortune in New Orleans. This person was called in his youth Jack Robinson. After twenty years of successful adventure, he now returned as John W. Robertson, Esq., and concluded to astonish for a while the natives of his own birth-place, and perhaps pass the summer among them. Therefore, he took two of the best apartments in the chief hotel; and having grown very tired of old bachelorship, and entertaining a great predilection for all the productions of his native town, he determined to select a wife from among the belles of Somerford.

Now Mr. Robertson was a man in whose face and figure the most amiable portrait-painter could have found nothing to commend. He was not what is called a fine-looking man, for though sufficiently tall, he was gaunt and ill-proportioned. He was not a handsome man, for every feature was ugly; and his complexion, as well as his hair, was all of one ash-colour; though his eyes were much lighter than his skin. He was fully aware of his deficiency in beauty; but it was some consolation to him that

he had been a very pretty baby, as he frequently took occasion to mention. With all this, he was extremely ambitious of marrying a beautiful woman, and resolutely determined that she should "love him for himself alone." Though in the habit of talking ostentatiously of his wealth, yet he sometimes considered this wealth as a sort of thorn in his path to matrimony; for he could not avoid the intrusion of a very uncomfortable surmise, that were he still poor Jack Robinson, he would undoubtedly be "cut dead" by the same ladies that were now assiduously angling for a word or a look from John W. Robertson, Esq. It is true that, being habitually cautious, he proceeded warily, and dispensed his notice to the ladies with much economy, finding that, in the words of charity advertisments, "the smallest donations were thankfully received."

Having once read a novel, and it being one in which the heroine blushes all through the book, he concluded that confusion and suffusion were infallible signs of love, and that whenever the bloom on a lady's cheeks deepens at the sight of a gentleman, there can be no doubt of the sincerity and disinterestedness of her regard, and that she certainly loves him for himself alone. Adopting this theory, Mr. Robertson determined not to owe his success to any adventitious circumstances; and he accordingly dis-

dained that attention to his toilet usually observed by gentlemen in the Cœlebs line. Therefore, as the season was summer, he walked about all the morning in a long loose gown of broad-striped gingham, buckskin shoes, and an enormous Leghorn hat, the brim turned up behind and down before. In the afternoon, his flying joseph was exchanged for a round jacket of sea-grass: and in the evening he generally appeared in a seersucker coat. But he was invited every where.

The mothers flattered him, and the daughters smiled on him, yet still he saw no blushes. He looked in vain for the "sweet confusion, rosy terror," which he supposed to be always evinced by a young lady in the presence of the man of her heart. The young ladies that *he* met with, had all their wits about them; and if on seeing him they covered their faces, it was only to giggle behind their fans. Instead of shrinking modestly back at his approach, they followed him every where; and he has more than once been seen perambulating the main street of Somerford at the head of half a dozen young ladies, like a locomotive engine drawing a train of cars.

With the exception of two professed novel-readers who treated our hero with ill-concealed contempt, because they could find in him no resemblance to

Lord St. Orville or to Thaddeus of Warsaw, Selina Mansel was almost the only lady in Somerford that took Mr. Robertson quietly. The truth was, she never thought of him at all: and it was this evident indifference, so strikingly contrasted with the unremitting solicitude of her companions, that first attracted his attention towards Selina, rather than her superioity in beauty or accomplishments; for Miss Madderlake had redder cheeks, Miss Tightscrew a smaller waist, Miss Deathscream sung louder, and Miss Twirlfoot danced higher.

Selina Mansel was the youngest of the Somerford belles, and had scarcely yet come out. It never entered her mind that a man of Mr. Robertson's age could think of marrying a girl of sixteen. How little she knew of old bachelors!

Having always heard herself termed "the child," by her father and her aunt, she still retained the habit of considering herself as such; and strange to tell, the idea of a lover had not yet found its way into her head or her heart. Accordingly, on meeting Mr. Robertson for the first time (it was at a small party) she thought she passed the evening pleasantly enough in sitting between two matrons, and hearing from them the praises of her aunt Wonderly's notability—accompanied by numerous suggestions of improvements in confectionary, and in the manage-

ment of servants; these hints being kindly intended for her benefit as a young housekeeper.

Mr. Robertson, who proceeded cautiously in every thing, after gazing at Selina across the room, satisfied himself that she was very handsome and very unaffected, and requested an introduction to her from the gentleman of the house, adding—"But not just now—any time in the course of the evening. You know, when ladies are in question, it is very impolitic in gentlemen to show too much eagerness."

The introduction eventually took place, and Mr. Robertson talked of the weather, then of the westerly winds, which he informed Selina were favourable to vessels going out to Europe, but dead a-head to those that were coming home. He then commenced a long story about the very profitable voyage of one of his ships, but told it in language unintelligible to any but a merchant.

Selina grew very tired, and having tried to listen quite as long as she thought due to civility, she renewed her conversation with one of the ladies that sat beside her, and Mr. Robertson, in some vexation, turned away and carried his dullness to the other end of the room, where pretty Miss Holdhimfast sat, the image of delighted attention, her eyes smiling with pleasure and her lips parted in intense

interest, while he talked to her of assorted cargoes, bills of lading, and custom-house bonds. At times, he looked round, over his shoulder, to see if Selina evinced any discomposure at his quitting her—but he perceived no signs of it.

Mr. Mansel having renewed his acquaintance with Mr. Robertson, our hero called next morning to pay a visit to the father of Selina, though his chief motive was the expectation of seeing the young lady, who since the preceding evening had occupied as much of his mind and thoughts as a thorough-going business man ever devotes to a woman.

Selina was in the parlour, and sat quietly at her sewing, not perceiving that, though Mr. Robertson talked to her father all the time about the Bank of the United States, he looked almost continually at her. On hearing the clock strike, she rose, put up her work, and repaired to her own room—recollecting that it was her day for writing to Mrs. Wonderly, and that the mail would close in two hours, which Selina had always found the shortest possible time for filling a large sheet of paper closely written—such being the missive that she despatched every week to her beloved aunt.

Mr. Robertson, after prolonging his visit to an unreasonable period, departed in no very good humour at Selina's not returning to the parlour: for though

he saw through the designs of the other ladies, he was somewhat piqued that our young and handsome heroine should have no design at all.

In the afternoon Selina went out on a shopping expedition. Mr. Robertson happened to overtake her, and she looked so very pretty, and tripped along so lightly and gracefully, that he could not refrain from joining her, instead of making his bow and passing on, as had been his first intention.

In the course of conversation, Selina was informed by Mr. Robertson (who, though no longer in business, still made the price-current his daily study) that, by the last advices from New York, tallow was calm, and hides were drooping—that pots were lively, and that pearls were looking up.

He accompanied Selina to the principal fancy-store, and when the young lady had completed her purchases, and had been persuaded by Mr. Stretchlace to take several additional articles, she found, on examining her purse, that she had nearly exhausted its contents, and that even with putting all her small change together, she still wanted one cent. Mr. Stretchlace assured her that he considered a cent as of no consequence; but Selina, who had been brought up in the strictest ideas of integrity, replied that, as she had agreed to pay as much for the article as he had asked her, she could not allow him to lose a

single farthing. Mr. Stretchlace smiled, and reminded her that she could easily stop in and give him the cent, at any time when she happened to be passing his store. Selina, recollecting her father's rule of never going in debt to a shopkeeper, even to the most trifling amount, proposed leaving a pair of gloves (her last purchase) till she came again. Mr. Robertson, to put an end to the difficulty, took a cent from his purse, and requested permission to lend it to Miss Mansel. Selina coloured, but after some hesitation accepted the loan, resolving to repay it immediately. Having this intention on her mind, she was rather glad when she found that Mr. Robertson intended walking home with her, as it would give her an opportunity of liquidating the debt—and he entertained her on the way with the history of a transaction in uplands.

They arrived at Mr. Mansel's door, and her companion was taking his leave, when Selina, thinking only of the cent, asked him if he would not come in. Of course, she had no motive but to induce him to wait till she had procured the little coin in question. He found the invitation too flattering to be resisted, and smirkingly followed her into the front parlour. Selina was disappointed at not finding her father there. Desiring Mr. Robertson to excuse her for a moment, she went to her own room in quest of some

change—but found nothing less than a five dollar note.

A young lady of more experience and more self-possession, would, at once, have thought of extricating herself from the dilemma by applying to one of the servants for the loan of a cent; but at this time no such idea entered Selina's head. Therefore, calling Ovid, her black man, she despatched him with the note to get changed, and then returned herself to the parlour.

Taking her seat near the centre-table, Selina endeavoured to engage her guest in conversation, lest he should go away without his money. But, too little accustomed to the world and its contingencies to feel at all at her ease on this occasion, not having courage to mention the cent, and afraid every moment that Mr. Robertson would rise to take his leave, she became more and more embarrassed, sat uneasily on her chair, kept her eyes on the floor, except when she stole glances at her visitor to see if he showed any symptoms of departure, and looked frequently towards the door, hoping the arrival of Ovid.

Unconscious of what she was doing, our heroine took a camellia japonica from a vase that stood on the table, and having smelled it a dozen times (though it is a flower that has no perfume) she began

to pick it to pieces. Mr. Robertson stopped frequently in the midst of a long story about a speculation in sperm oil, his attention being continually engaged by the evident perturbation of the young lady. But when he saw her picking to pieces the camellia which she had pressed to her nose and to her lips, he was taken with a sudden access of gallantry, and stalking up to her, and awkwardly stretching out his hand at arm's length, he said in a voice intended to be very sweet—"Miss Mansel, will you favour me with that flower?"

Selina, not thinking of what she did, hastily dropped the camellia into his out-spread palm, and ran to meet her servant Ovid, whom she saw at that moment coming into the house. She stopped him in the hall, and eagerly held out her hand, while Ovid slowly and carefully counted into it, one by one, ten half dollars, telling her that he had been nearly all over town with the note, as "change is always *scace* of an afternoon."

"How vexatious!" said Selina, in a low voice—"You have brought me no cents. It was particularly a cent that I wanted—a cent above all things. Did I not tell you so?—I am sure I thought I did."

Ovid persisted in declaring that she had merely desired him to get the note changed, and that he

thought "nobody needn't wish for better change than all big silver,"—but feeling in his pocket, he said "he believed, if Miss Selina would let him, he could lend her a cent." However, after searching all his pockets, he found only a quarter of a dollar. "But," added he, I can go in the kitchen and ax if the women hav'n't got no coppers. Ah! Miss Selina—your departed aunt always kept her pocket full."

Selina then desired him to go immediately and inquire for a cent among the women. She then returned to the parlour, and Mr. Robertson, having nothing more to say, rose to take his leave. During her absence from the room, he had torn off the back of a letter, folded in it the half-demolished camellia japonica, and deposited it in his waistcoat pocket.

Selina begged him to stay a few minutes longer, and she went into the kitchen to inquire in person about the cent.

"Apparently," thought Robertson, "she finds it hard to part with me. And certainly she *has* seemed confused and agitated, during the whole of my visit."

On making her inquiry among the denizens of the kitchen, Selina found that none of the women had any probable coppers, excepting Violet, the black cook, who was fat and lame, and who intend-

ed, as soon as she had done making some cakes for tea, to ascend to her attic, and search for one among her hoards.

"La! Miss Selina," said Violet, "what can put you in such a pheeze about a cent?"

"I have borrowed a cent of Mr. Robertson," replied Selina, "and I wish to return it immediately."

"Well, now, if ever!" exclaimed Violet; "why, if that's all, I count it the same as nothing, and samer. To be sure he is too much of a gentleman to take a cent from a lady. Why, what's a cent?"

"I hope," replied Selina, "that he is too much of a gentleman to *refuse* to take it."

"I lay you what you please," resumed Violet, "that if you go to offer him that cent, you'll 'front him out of the house. Why, when any of us borrows a copper of Ovid, we never thinks of paying him."

"True enough," said Ovid, half aside; "and that's the reason I most always take care never to have no coppers about me."

Selina now heard her father's voice in the parlour; and glad that he had come home, she hastened to obtain from him the much-desired coin. She found him earnestly engaged in discussing the Bank of the United States to Mr. Robertson, who was on the verge of departure. She went softly behind her

father, and in a low voice asked him for a cent; but he was talking so busily that he did not hear her. She repeated the request. "Presently—presently," said Mr. Mansel, "another time will do as well." Mr. Robertson then made his parting bow to Selina, who, disconcerted at being baffled in all her attempts to get rid of her little debt, coloured excessively, and could not make an articulate reply to his "Good afternoon, Miss Mansel."

When her father returned from escorting his guest to the door, he recollected her request, and said—"What were you asking me, Selina? I think I heard you say something about money. But never interrupt me when I am talking of the bank."

Selina then made her explanation.

"You know," replied Mr. Mansel, "that I have always told you to avoid a debt as you would a sin; and I have also cautioned you never to allow yourself to be without all the varieties of small change."

He then gave her a handful of this convenient article, including half a dozen cents, saying, "There, now, do not forget to pay Mr. Robertson the first time you see him."

"Certainly, I will not forget it," replied Selina, "for, trifle as it is, I shall not feel at peace while it remains on my mind."

On the following afternoon Selina went out with

her father to take a ride on horseback; and when they returned, they found on the centre table the card of John W. Robertson. "Another contretems," cried Selina. "He has been here again, and I have not seen him to pay him the cent!"

"Send it to him by Ovid," said Mr. Mansel.

"*Send* such a trifle to a gentleman!" exclaimed Selina.

"Certainly," replied her father. "Even in the smallest trifles, it is best to be correct and punctual. You know I have always told you so."

Selina left the room for the purpose of despatching Ovid with the cent, but Ovid had gone out on some affairs of his own, and when she returned to the parlour she found two young ladies there, whose visit was not over till nearly dusk. By that time Ovid was engaged in setting the tea-table; a business from which nothing could ever withdraw him till all its details were slowly and minutely accomplished.

"It will be time enough after tea," said Selina, who, like most young housekeepers, was somewhat in awe of her servants. When tea was over both in parlour and kitchen (and by the members of the lower house that business was never accomplished without a long session), Ovid was despatched to the hotel with Miss Mansel's compliments to Mr. Rob-

ertson, and the cent that she had borrowed of him. It was long before Ovid came back, and he then brought word that Mr. Robertson was out, but that he had left the cent with Mr. Muddler, the bar-keeper.

"Of course," said Selina, "the bar-keeper will give it to Mr. Robertson as soon as he returns."

"I have my doubts," replied Ovid.

"Why?" asked Selina; "why should you suppose otherwise?"

"Because," answered Ovid, "Mr. Muddler is a very doubty sort of man. That is, he's always to be doubted of. I lived at the hotel once, and I know all about him. He don't mind trifles, and he never remembers nothing. I guess Mr. Robertson won't be apt to get the cent: for afore I left the bar, I saw Muddler give it away in change to a man that came for a glass of punch. And I'm sure that Muddler won't never think no more about it. I could be as good as qualified that he won't."

"How very provoking!" cried Selina.

"You should have sealed it up in a piece of paper, and directed it to Mr. Robertson," said her father, raising his eyes from the newspaper in which he had been absorbed for the last hour. "Whatever is to be done at all, should always be done thoroughly."

"Yes, Miss," said Ovid, "you know that's what

your departed aunt always told you: partikaly when you were stoning reasons for plum-cake."

Selina was now at a complete loss what course to pursue. The cent was in itself a trifle; but there had been so much difficulty about it, that it seemed to have swelled into an object of importance: and from this time her repugnance to speaking of it to Mr. Robertson, or to any one else, became almost insurmountable.

On the following morning, her father told her that he had met Mr. Robertson at the Post Office, and had been told by him that he should do himself the pleasure of making a morning call. "Therefore, Selina, I shall leave you to entertain him," said Mr. Mansel, "for I have made an appointment with Mr. Thinwall this morning, to go with him to look at a block of houses he is anxious to sell me."

Selina repaired to her room to get her sewing: and taking a cent from her purse, she laid it in her work-basket and went down stairs to be ready for the visit of Mr. Robertson. While waiting for him, she happened to look at the cent, and perceived that it was one of the very earliest coinage, the date being 1793. She had heard these cents described, but had never before seen one. The head of Liberty was characterized by the lawless freedom of her hair, the flakes of which were all flying wildly back from

her forehead and cheek, and seemed to be blowing away in a strong north-wester; and she carried over her shoulder a staff surmounted with a cap. On the reverse, there was (instead of the olive wreath) a circular chain, whose links signified the union of the States. Our heroine was making a collection of curious coins, and she was so strongly tempted by the opportunity of adding this to the number, that she determined on keeping it for that purpose. She was just rising to go up stairs and get another as a substitute, when Mr. Robertson entered the parlour.

Selina was glad to see him, hoping that this visit would make a final settlement of the eternal cent. But she was also struck with the idea that it would be very awkward to ask him if the bar-keeper had given him the one she had transmitted to him the evening before. She feared that the gentleman might reply in the affirmative, even if he had not really received it, and she felt a persuasion that it had entirely escaped the memory of Mr. Muddler. Not having sufficient self-possession to help her out of the difficulty, she hastily slipped the old cent back into her work-basket, and looked confused and foolish, and answered incoherently to Mr. Robertson's salutation. He saw her embarrassment, and augured favourably from it: but he cautiously determined not to allow himself to proceed too rapidly.

He commenced the conversation by informing her that sugars had declined a shade, but that coffee was active, and cotton firm; and he then prosed off into a long mercantile story, of which Selina heard and understood nothing: her ideas, when in presence of Mr. Robertson, being now unable to take any other form than that of a piece of copper.

Longing to go for another cent, and regretting that she had not brought down her purse, she sat uneasy and disconcerted: the delighted Robertson pausing in the midst of his tierces of rice, seroons of indigo, carboys of tar, and quintals of cod-fish, to look at the heightened colour of her cheek, and to give it the interpretation he most desired.

Selina had never thought him so tiresome. Just then came in Miss Peapabout and Miss Doublesight, who having seen Mr. Robertson through the window, had a curiosity to ascertain what he was saying and doing at Mr. Mansel's. These two ladies were our hero's peculiar aversion, as they had both presumed to lay siege to him, notwithstanding that they were neither young nor handsome. Therefore he rose immediately and took his leave: though Selina, in the hope of still finding an opportunity to discharge her debt, said to him anxiously—"Do not go yet, Mr. Robertson." This request nearly elevated the lover to paradise, but

not wishing to spoil her by too much compliance, he persevered in departing.

That evening Selina met him at a party given by Mrs. Vincent, one of the leading ladies of Somerford. Thinking of this possibility, and the idea of Mr. Robertson and a cent having now become synonymous, our heroine tied a bright new one in the corner of her pocket-handkerchief, determined to go fully prepared for an opportunity of presenting it to him. When, on arriving at Mrs. Vincent's house, she was shown to the ladies' room, Selina discovered that the cent had vanished, having slipped out from its fastening; and after an ineffectual search on the floor and on the stair-case, she concluded that she must have dropped it in the street. The night was very fine, and Mrs. Vincent's residence was so near her father's, that Selina had walked thither, and Mr. Mansel (who had no relish for parties), after conducting her into the principal room, and paying his compliments to the hostess, had slipped off, and returned home to seek a quiet game of back-gammon with his next-door neighbour, telling his daughter that he would come for her at eleven o'clock.

Our heroine was dressed with much taste, and looked unusually well. Mr. Robertson's inclination would have led him to attach himself to Selina for the whole evening; but convinced of the depth and

sincerity of her regard (as he perceived that she now never saw him without blushing) he deemed it politic to hold back, and not allow himself to be considered too cheap a conquest. Therefore, after making his bow, and informing her that soap was heavy, but that raisins were animated, and that there was a good feeling towards Havana cigars, he withdrew to the opposite side of the room.

But though he divided his tediousness pretty equally among the other ladies, he could not prevent his eyes from wandering almost incessantly towards Selina, particularly when he perceived a remarkably handsome young man, Henry Wynslade, engaged in a very lively conversation with her. Mr. Wynslade, who had recently returned from India, lodged, for the present, at the hotel in which Robertson had located himself; consequently, our hero had some acquaintance with him.

Mrs. Vincent having taken away Wynslade to introduce him to her niece, Mr. Robertson immediately strode across the room, and presented himself in front of Selina. To do him justice, he had entirely forgotten the cent: and he meant not the most distant allusion to it, when, at the end of a long narrative about a very close and fortunate bargain he had once made in rough turpentine, he introduced the well-known adages of "a penny saved is a penny

got," and "take care of the pence and the pounds will take care of themselves."

"Pence and cents are nearly the same," thought the conscious Selina. She had on her plate some of the little printed rhymes that, being accompanied by bonbons, and enveloped in coloured paper, go under the denomination of secrets or mottoes. These delectablè distichs were most probably the leisure effusions of the poet kept by Mr. and Mrs. Packwood, of razor-strop celebrity, and from their ludicrous silliness frequently cause much diversion among the younger part of the company.

In her confusion on hearing Mr. Robertson talk of pence, Selina began to distribute her mottoes among the ladies in her vicinity, and without looking at it, she unthinkingly presented one to her admirer, as he stood stiff before her. A moment after he was led away by Mr. Vincent, to be introduced to a stranger: and in a short time the company adjourned to the supper-room.

The ladies were all seated, and the gentlemen were standing round, and Selina was not aware of her proximity to Mr. Robertson till she overheard him say to young Wynslade—"A most extraordinary circumstance has happened to me this evening."

"What is it?" cried Wynslade.

"I have received a declaration."

"A declaration! Of what?"

"I have indeed," pursued Robertson, "a declaration of love. To be sure, I have been somewhat prepared for it. When a lady blushes, and shows evident signs of confusion, whenever she meets a gentleman, there is good reason to believe that her heart is really touched. Is there not?"

"I suppose so," said Wynslade, smiling.

"You conclude then that the lady must love him for himself, and not for his property?" inquired Robertson.

"Ladies who are influenced only by mercenary considerations," replied Wynslade, "seldom feel much embarrassment in the presence of any gentleman."

"There is no forcing a blush—is there?" asked Robertson.

"I should think not," answered Wynslade, wondering to what all this would tend.

"To tell you a secret," resumed Robertson, "I have proof positive that I have made a serious impression on a very beautiful young lady. You need not smile, Mr. Wynslade, for I can show you something that was presented to me the other day by herself, after first pressing it repeatedly to her lips."

He then took out of his waistcoat pocket the paper that contained the remnant of the camellia japonica, adding—" I can assure you that this flower was given me by the prettiest girl in the room."

The eyes of Wynslade were involuntarily directed to Selina.

" You are right," resumed Robertson. " That is the very lady, Miss Selina Mansel."

" Can it be possible!" exclaimed Wynslade. " Is this the lady that blushes at you? Did *she* give you the flower?"

" Yes, she did," replied Robertson. " A true bill, I assure you. The flower was her gift, and she has just presented me with a piece of poetry that is still more pointed. And yet, between ourselves, I think it strange that so young a lady should not have had patience to wait for a declaration on my part. I wonder that she should be the first to break the ice. However, I suppose it is only a stronger evidence of her partiality."

" And what are you going to do?" asked Wynslade.

" Oh! I shall take her," answered Robertson. " At least I think I shall. To be sure, I have been so short a time in Somerford, that I have scarcely yet had an opportunity of ascertaining the state of the market. But, besides her being an only child, with a father

that is likely to come down handsomely, she is very young and very pretty, and will in every respect suit me exactly. However, I shall proceed with due circumspection. It is bad policy to be too alert on these occasions. It will be most prudent to keep her in suspense awhile."

"Insufferable coxcomb!" thought Wynslade. However, he checked his contempt and indignation so far as to say with tolerable calmness—"Mr. Robertson, there must be certainly some mistake. Before I went to India, I knew something of Miss Mansel and her family, and I reproach myself for not having sought to renew my acquaintance with them immediately on my return. She was a mere child when I last saw her before my departure. Still, I know from the manner in which she has been brought up, that it is utterly impossible she should have given you any real cause to suspect her of a partiality which, after all, you seem incapable of appreciating."

"Suspect!" exclaimed Robertson warmly, "suspect indeed! Blushes and confusion you acknowledge to be certain signs. And then there is the flower—and then"—

"Where is the piece of poetry you talked of?" said Wynslade.

"Here," replied Robertson, showing him the

motto—"here it is—read—and confess it to be proof positive."

Wynslade took the slip, and read on it,

'Tô gain a look of your sweet face,
I'd walk three times round the market-place.'

"Ridiculous!" he exclaimed, as he returned the couplet to Robertson, the course of his ideas changing in a moment. The whole affair now appeared to him in so ludicrous a light, that he erroneously imagined Selina to have been all the time diverting herself at Mr. Robertson's expense. He looked towards her with a smile of intelligence, and was suprised to find that she had set down her almost untasted ice-cream, and was changing colour, from red to pale, evidently overwhelmed with confusion.

"There," said Robertson, looking significantly from Selina to Wynslade, I told you so—only see her cheeks. No doubt she has overheard all we have been saying."

Selina had indeed overheard the whole; for notwithstanding the talking of the ladies who were near her, her attention had been the whole time riveted on the conversation that was going on between Robertson and Wynslade. Her first impulse was to quit her seat, to go at once to Robertson, and to ex-

plain to him his mistake. But she felt the difficulty of making such an effort in a room full of company, and to the youthful simplicity of her mind that difficulty was enhanced by the want of a cent to put into his hand at the same time.

Still, she was so extremely discomfited, that every moment seemed to her an age till she could have an opportunity of undeceiving him. She sat pale and silent till Robertson stepped up and informed her that she seemed quite below par; and Wynslade, who followed him, observed that "Miss Mansel was probably incommoded by the heat of the room."

"Oh, yes!" she exclaimed, scarcely conscious of what she was saying; it is, indeed, too warm—and here is such a crowd—and I am so fatigued—I wish it were eleven o'clock—I wish my father were here to take me home."

Both gentlemen at once volunteered their services; but Selina, struck with the idea that during their walk she should have a full opportunity of making her explanation to Mr. Robertson, immediately started up, and said she would avail herself of *his* offer. Robertson now cast a triumphant glance at Wynslade, who returned it with a look of disgust, and walked away, saying to himself—"What an incomprehensible being is woman!—I begin to despise the whole sex!"

Selina then took leave of her hostess, and in a few minutes found herself on her way home with Mr. Robertson.

"Mr. Robertson," said she, in a hurried voice, "I have something particular to say to you."

"Now it is coming," thought Robertson; "but I will take care not to meet her half way." Then speaking aloud—"It is a fine moonlight evening," said he: "that is probably what you are going to observe."

"You are under a serious mistake," continued Selina.

"I believe not," pursued Robertson, looking up. "The sky is quite clear, and the moon is at the full."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Selina.

"I am fond of moonlight," persisted Robertson; "and I am extremely flattered at your giving me an opportunity of enjoying it with you." Here he stopped short, fearing that he had said too much.

"My only motive," said Selina, "for accepting your offer of escorting me home, was that I might have an opportunity of explaining to you." Here she paused.

"Take your time, Miss Selina," said Robertson, trying to soften his voice. "I do not wish you to

hurry yourself. I can wait very well for the explanation till to-morrow."

"No, you shall not," said Selina; "I must make it at once, for I shall be unable to sleep to-night till I have relieved my mind from it."

"Surely," thought Robertson to himself, "young ladies now-a-days are remarkably forward. Well, then, Miss Mansel," speaking aloud, "proceed at once to the point. I am all attention."

Selina still hesitated—"Really," said she, "I know not how to express myself."

"No doubt of it," he replied; "young ladies, I suppose, are not accustomed to being very explicit on these occasions. However, I can understand—'A word to the wise,' you know: but the truth is, for my own part, I have not quite made up my mind. You are sensible that our acquaintance is of very recent date: a wife is not a bill to be accepted at sight. You know the proverb—'Marry in haste and repent at leisure.'. However, I think you may draw on me at sixty days. And now that I have acknowledged the receipt of your addresses"——

Selina interrupted him with vehemence—"Mr. Robertson, what are you talking about? You are certainly not in your senses. You are mistaken, I tell you—it is no such thing."

"Come, Miss Mansel," said Robertson, "do not fly from your offer: it is too late for what they call coquetry—actions speak louder than words. If I must be plain, why so much embarrassment whenever we meet? To say nothing of the flower you gave me—and that little verse, which speaks volumės"——

"Speaks nonsense!" cried Selina: "Is it possible you can be so aburd as to suppose"——Then bursting into tears of vexation, she exclaimed—"Oh that I had a cent!"

"A cent!" said Robertson, much surprised. "Is it possible you are crying for a cent?"

"Yes I am," answered Selina; "just now, that is all I want on earth!"

"Well, then," said Robertson, taking one out of his pocket, "you shall cry for it no longer: here's one for you."

"This won't do—this won't do!" sobbed Selina.

"Why, I am sure it is a good cent," said Robertson, "just like any other."

"No," cried Selina, "your giving me another cent only makes things worse."

By this time they were in sight of Mr. Mansel's door, and Selina perceived something on the pavement glittering in the moonlight. "Ah!" she exclaimed, taking it up, "this must be the very cent I

dropped on my way to Mrs. Vincent's. I know it by its being quite a new one. How glad I am to find it!"

"Well," said Robertson, "I have heard of ladies taking cents to church; but I never knew before that they had any occasion for them at tea-parties. And, by-the-bye, (as I have often told my friend Pennychink the vestryman,) that practice of handing a money-box round the church, in service-time, is one of the meanest things I know, and I wonder how any man that is a gentleman can bring himself to do it."

"And now, Mr. Robertson," said Selina, hastily wiping her eyes, "have you forgotten that I borrowed a cent of you the other day at Mr. Stretchlace's store?"

"I *had* forgotten it," answered Robertson; "but I recollect it now."

"That cent was never returned to you," said Selina.

"It was not," replied Robertson, looking surprised.

"There it is," continued our heroine, as she gave it to him. "Now that I see it in your hand, I have courage to explain all. My father and my aunt have taught me to dread contracting even the smallest debt. Therefore, I could not feel at ease till I had

repaid your cent. Several untoward circumstances have since prevented my giving it to you, though I can assure you, that whenever we met it was seldom absent from my mind. This was the real cause of the embarrassment or confusion you talk of. When I gave you the flower, and afterwards that foolish motto, I was thinking so much of the unlucky cent as to be scarcely conscious of what I was doing. Believe me when I repeat to you that this is the whole truth of what you have so strangely misinterpreted."

"Is it possible!" exclaimed Robertson: "and was there nothing in it but a paltry bit of copper, when I thought all the time that I had at last met with a young lady who loved me for myself, and not for my bank-stock, and my real estate, and my rail-road shares!"

"For neither, I can assure you," said Selina, gaily; "but I shall be very glad to hear that yourself, and your bank-stock, and your real estate, and your rail-road shares, have become the property of a lady of better taste than myself."

They had been for some time on the steps of Mr. Mansel's door, and before he rung the bell, Robertson said to Selina: "Well, however, you know I did not actually come to a proposal?"

"Not exactly," replied Selina, smiling.

"Therefore, you will not tell every body that you refused me?"

"I will not, indeed," answered Selina. "And now then, allow me to bid you adieu in the words of the song—'Good night—all's well!'"

She then tripped into the parlour, where she found her father just preparing to come for her; and having made him very merry with her account of the events of the evening, she went to bed with a light heart.

Mr. Robertson returned sullenly to his hotel, as much chagrined as a man of his obtuse feelings could possibly be. And he was the more vexed at losing Selina, as he conceived that a woman who could give herself so much uneasiness on account of a cent, would consequently make a good wife. The more he thought of this, the better he liked her: and next morning, when Henry Wynslade inquired of him the progress of wooing, Robertson not having invention enough to gloss over the truth, told him the facts as they really were, and asked his companion's opinion of the possibility of yet obtaining Miss Mansel.

"Try again by all means," said Wynslade, who was curious to see how this business would end. "There is no knowing what may be the effect of a direct proposal—the ladies never like us the better

for proceeding slowly and cautiously: so now for a point blank shot."

"It shall be conveyed in a letter then," replied Robertson;"I have always found it best, in matters of business, to put down every thing in black and white."

"Do it at once then," said Wynslade: "I have some thoughts of Miss Mansel myself, and perhaps I may cut you out."

"I doubt that," replied Robertson; "you are but commencing business, and *my* fortune is already made."

"I thought," observed Wynslade, "you would marry only on condition of being loved for yourself alone."

"I have given up that hope," answered Robertson, with a sort of sigh: "however, I was certainly a very pretty baby. I fear I must now be content to take a wife on the usual terms."

"Be quick, then, with your proposal," said Wynslade, "for I am impatient to make mine."

Wynslade then departed, and Robertson placed himself at his desk, and in a short time despatched to our heroine the following epistle, taking care to keep a copy of it:

"MISS SELINA MANSEL:—Your statement last night was duly attended to; but further consideration

may give another turn to the business. The following terms are the best I think proper to offer:

"One Town House—1 Country House—6 Servants—3 Horses—1 Carriage—1 Chaise—1 Set of Jewels—2 New Dresses per Month—3 Bonnets per Ann.—1 Tea Party on your Birth-day—Ditto on mine—1 Dinner Party on each anniversary of our Wedding Day, till further orders—10 Plays per Season—and half an Opera.

"If you are not satisfied with the T. H. and the C. H. you may take 1 trip per summer to the Springs or the Sea-shore. If the Parties on the B. D.'s and the W. D. are not deemed sufficient, you may have sundry others.

"On your part I only stipulate for a dish of rice always at dinner, black tea, 12 cigars per day, to be smoked by me without remark from you—newspapers, chess, and sundries. Your politics to be always the same as mine. No gentlemen under fifty to be received, except at parties. No musician to be allowed to enter the house; nor any young doctor.

"If you conclude to close with these conditions, let me have advice of it as soon as convenient, that I may wait upon you without loss of time.

"Your most obt. servt.

"John W. Robertson.

"N. B. It may be well to mention, that with respect to furniture, I cannot allow a piano, considering them as nuisances. Shall not object to any reasonable number of sofas and rocking-chairs.—Astral lamps at discretion.—Beg to call your attention to the allowance of gowns and bonnets.—Consider it remarkably liberal.—With respect to dress, sundries of course."

To this letter half an hour brought a concise answer, containing a civil but decided refusal, which Mr. Robertson, though quite crest-fallen, could not forbear showing to Wynslade, telling him that he now withdrew from the market. On the following morning our hero left Somerford on a tour to Canada.

Wynslade immediately laid siege to Selina Mansel, and being young, handsome, intelligent, and very much in love, he found little difficulty in obtaining her heart and hand.

After their marriage the young couple continued to live with Mr. Mansel, who since the affair of Robertson has taken especial care that Selina shall always be well supplied with cents, frequently procuring her from the bank five dollars' worth at a time.

John W. Robertson finally established himself in one of the large Atlantic cities; and in process of

time his vanity recovered from the shock that had been given it by Miss Mansel. He has lately married a young widow, who being dependent with her five children on the bounty of her sister's husband, in whose house she lived with all her family, had address enough to persuade him that she loved him for himself alone.

THE LADIES' BALL.

Then, thrilling to the harp's gay sound,
So sweetly rung each vaulted wall,
And echoed light the dancer's bound,
As mirth and music cheer'd the hall.—*Scott.*

THE gentlemen who were considered as the élite of a certain city that shall be nameless, had been for some years in the practice of giving, about Christmas, a splendid ball to the ladies of the same circle. But at the period from which we date the commencement of our story, Christmas was fast approaching, and there had, as yet, been no intimation of the usual practical compliment.

Conjecture was busy among the ladies, as to the cause of this extraordinary defection; but it was most generally attributed to the palpable fact that the attention of the gentlemen had been recently directed to a very different channel. In short, the beaux were now taking vast strides in the march of intellect, pio-

neered by certain newly popular lecturers in various departments of science. The pursuit of knowledge, both useful and useless, had become the order of the day. Profound were the researches into those mysteries of nature that in this world can never be elucidated: and long and elaborate were the dissertations on points that, when established, would not be worth a farthing.

The "beaux turned savans," had formed themselves into an association to which they had given a polysyllabic name of Greek etymology, and beyond the power of female tongue to pronounce, or of female hand to write; but a very young girl designated it as the Fee-faw-fum Society. They hired a spare room in one of the public buildings, and assembled there "in close divan" on stated nights when there were no evening lectures: several of the ologists holding forth to their classes of afternoons.

One seemingly indispensable instructor brought up the rear of the host of lecturers, and this was a professor of mnemonics: that is, a gentleman who gave lessons in memory, pledging himself to furnish the minds of his pupils with a regular set of springs, which as soon as touched would instantly unlock the treasures of knowledge that were laid up in "the store-house of the brain:" the springs being acted upon by certain sheets of engraved and col-

oured hieroglyphics, some of which were numerical figures, other represented trees and houses, and cats and dogs, much in the style of what children call primmer pictures. Some of our readers may, perhaps, recollect this professor, who made the circuit of the Union a few years since.

There seemed but two objections to this system, one being that the hieroglyphics and their key were harder to remember than the things they were to remind you of: the other, that they were frequently to be understood by contraries, like the Hetman in Count Benyowsky, whose characteristic phrascology is—"When I say the garret, I mean the cellar—when I tell you to go up, I mean you to come down."

The professor of mnemonics was very unpopular with the ladies, who asserted that he had done the gentlemen more harm than good, by so puzzling their already overcharged heads, that he, in many instances, destroyed what little memory they had once possessed. This was particularly the case with regard to Mr. Slowman, who having, at length, proposed in form to Miss Tremor, and the lady, in her agitation, being unable at the moment to give him an intelligible answer, he had never remembered to press his suit any further.

One thing was certain, that since the gentlemen

had been taking lessons in memory, they seemed totally to have forgotten the annual ball.

Yet, as the time drew near, there could be no doubt of its frequently entering their minds, from their steadily avoiding all reference to the subject. There was evidently a tacit understanding among them, that it was inexpedient to mention the ball. But the ice was at last broken by Gordon Fitzsimmons, as they were all standing round the fire, and adjusting their cloaks and surtouts, at the close of one of their society meetings.

"Is it not time," said he, "that we should begin to prepare for the Christmas ball?"

There was a silence—at last, one of the young gentlemen spoke, and replied—"that he had long since come to a conclusion that dancing was a very foolish thing, and that there was something extremely ridiculous in seeing a room-full of men and women jumping about to the sound of a fiddle. In short, he regarded it as an amusement derogatory to the dignity of human nature."

He was interrupted in the midst of his philippic by Fitzsimmons, who advised him to "consider it not so deeply." Now Fitzsimmons was himself an excellent dancer, very popular as a partner, conscious of looking well in a ball-room, and therefore a warm advocate for "the poetry of motion."

Another of the young philosophers observed, "that he saw neither good nor harm in dancing, considered merely as an exercise: but that he was now busily engaged in writing a treatise on the Milky Way, the precise nature of which he had undoubtedly discovered, and therefore he had no leisure to attend to the ball or the ladies."

A second, who was originally from Norridgewock, in the state of Maine, protested that almost every moment of his time was now occupied in lithographing his drawings for the Flora Norridgewockiana, a work that would constitute an important accession to the science of botany, and which he was shortly going to publish.

A third declared frankly, that instead of subscribing to the ball, he should devote all his spare cash to a much more rational purpose, that of purchasing a set of geological specimens from the Himalaya mountains. A fifth, with equal candour, announced a similar intention with regard to a box of beetles lately arrived from Van Diemen's Land.

A sixth was deeply and unremittingly employed in composing a history of the Muskogee Indians, in which work he would prove to demonstration that they were of Russian origin, as their name denotes: Muskogee being evidently a corruption of Muscovite; just as the Tuscaroras are undoubtedly of Ital-

ian descent, the founders of their tribe having, of course, come over from Tuscany.

And a seventh (who did things on a large scale) could not possibly give his attention to a ball or any thing else, till he had finished a work which would convince the world that the whole Atlantic ocean was once land, and that the whole American continent was once water.

To be brief, the number of young men who were in favour of the ball was so very limited, that it seemed impossible to get one up in a manner approaching to the style of former years. And the gentlemen, feeling a sort of consciousness that they were not exactly in their duty, became more remiss than ever in visiting the ladies.

It was now the week before Christmas: the ladies being in hourly expectation of receiving their cards, had already begun to prepare; and flowers, feathers, ribands and laces were in great activity. Still no invitations came. It was now conjectured that the ball was, for some extraordinary reason, to be deferred till New Year's. But what this reason was, the ladies (being all in a state of pique) had too much pride to inquire.

The gentlemen began to feel a little ashamed; and Gordon Fitzsimmons had nearly prevailed on them to agree to a New Year's ball, when Apesley Sap-

pington (who had recently returned from England in a coat by Stultz, and boots by Hoby) threw a damp on the whole business, by averring that, with the exception of Miss Lucinda Mandeville, who was certainly a splendid woman with a splendid fortune, there was not a lady in the whole circle worth favouring with a ball ticket. At least so they appeared to him, after seeing Lady Caroline Percy, and Lady Augusta Howard, and Lady Georgiana Beauclerck. Mr. Sappington did not explain that his only view of these fair blossoms of nobility had been circumscribed to such glimpses as he could catch of them while he stood in the street among a crowd assembled in front of Devonshire House, to gaze on the company through the windows, which in London are always open on gala nights. He assured his friends that all the ladies of the American aristocracy had a sort of parvenue air, and looked as if they had passed their lives east of Temple Bar; and that he knew not a single one of them that would be presentable at Almack's: always excepting Miss Lucinda Mandeville.

The gentlemen savans knew Apesley Sappington to be a coxcomb, and in their own minds did not believe him; but still they thought it scarcely worth while to allow their favourite pursuits to be interrupted for the sake of giving a ball to ladies that

might be unpresentable at Almack's, and that *possibly* looked like parvenues from the east side of Temple Bar.

The belles, though much disappointed at the failure of the expected fête, proudly determined not to advert to the subject by the remotest hint in presence of the beaux; carefully avoiding even to mention the word cotillon when a gentleman was by. One young lady left off wishing that Taglioni would come to America, the name of that celebrated *artiste* being synonymous with dancing; and another checked herself when about to inquire of her sister if she had seen a missing ball of silk, because the word ball was not to be uttered before one of the male sex.

Things were in this uncomfortable state, when Miss Lucinda Mandeville, the belle par excellence, gave a turn to them which we shall relate after presenting our readers with a sketch of the lady herself.

Miss Mandeville was very beautiful, very accomplished, and very rich, and had just completed her twenty-second year. Her parents being dead, she presided over an elegant mansion in the most fashionable part of the city, having invited an excellent old lady, a distant relation of the family, to reside with her. Mrs. Danforth, however, was but nominally the companion of Miss Mandeville, being so

entirely absorbed in books that it was difficult to get her out of the library.

The hand of Miss Mandeville had been sought openly by one half the gentlemen that boasted the honour of her acquaintance, and it had been hinted at by the other half, with the exception of Gordon Fitzsimmons, a young attorney of highly promising talents, whose ambition would have led him to look forward to the probability of arriving at the summit of his profession, but whose rise was, as yet, somewhat impeded by several very singular notions: such, for instance, as that a lawyer should never plead against his conscience, and never undertake what he knows to be the wrong side of a cause.

Another of his peculiarities was a strange idea that no gentleman should ever condescend to be under pecuniary obligations to his wife—ergo—that a man who has nothing himself should never marry a woman that has any thing. This last consideration had induced Mr. Fitzsimmons to undertake the Herculean task of steeling his heart, and setting his face against the attractions of Miss Mandeville, with all her advantages of mind and person. Notwithstanding, therefore, that her conversation was always delightful to him, he rarely visited her, except when invited with other company.

Lucinda Mandeville, who, since the age of sixteen,

had been surrounded by admirers, and accustomed to all the adulation that is generally lavished on a beauty and an heiress, was surprised at the apparent coldness of Gordon Fitzsimmons, than whòm she had never met with a young man more congenial to her taste. His manifest indifference continually attracted her attention, and, after a while, she began to suspect that it was no indifference at all, and that something else lurked beneath it. What that was, the sagacity of her sex soon enabled her to discover.

Fitzsimmons never urged Lucinda to play, never handed her to the piano, never placed her harp for her, never turned over the leaves of her music book; but she always perceived, that though he affected to mingle with the groups that stood round as listeners, he uniformly took a position from whence he could see her to advantage all the time. When she happened to glance towards him, which, it must be confessed, she did much oftener than she intended (particularly when she came to the finest passage of her song), she never failed to find his eyes fixed on her face with a gaze of involuntary admiration, that when they met, were instantly changed to an averted look of indifference.

Though he was scrupulous in dancing with her once only in the course of the evening, she could not but perceive that, during this set, his counte-

nance, in spite of himself, lighted up with even more than its usual animation. And if she accidentally turned her head, she saw that his eyes were following her every motion: as well indeed they might, for she danced with the lightness of a sylph, and the elegance of a lady.

Notwithstanding his own acknowledged taste for every thing connected with the fine arts, Fitzsimmons never asked to see Miss Mandeville's drawings. But she observed that after she had been showing them to others, and he supposed her attention to be elsewhere engaged, he failed not to take them up, and gaze on them as if he found it difficult to lay them down again.

In conversation, he never risqued a compliment to Miss Mandeville, but often dissented with her opinion, and frequently rallied her.—Yet when she was talking to any one else, he always contrived to be within hearing: and frequently, when engaged himself in conversing with others, he involuntarily stopped short to listen to what Lucinda was saying.

Miss Mandeville had read much, and seen much, and had had much love made to her: but her heart had never, till now, been touched even slightly. That Fitzsimmons admired her she could not possibly doubt: and that he loved her she would have been equally certain, only that he continued all the

time in excellent health and spirits; that so far from sitting "like patience on a monument," he seldom sat any where: that when he smiled (which he did very often) it was evidently not at grief: and that the concealment he affected, was assuredly not feeding on his cheek, which so far from turning "green and yellow," had lost nothing of its "natural ruby."

Neither was our heroine at all likely to die for love. Though there seemed no prospect of his coming to a proposal, and though she was sometimes assured by the youngest and prettiest of her female friends, that they knew from authentic sources that Mr. Fitzsimmons had magnanimously declared against marrying a woman of fortune; yet other ladies, who were neither young nor handsome, and had no hope of Mr. Fitzsimmons for themselves, were so kind as to convince Miss Mandeville that he admired her even at "the very top of admiration." And these generous and disinterested ladies were usually, after such agreeable communications, invited by Miss Mandeville to pass the evening with her.

Also—our heroine chanced one day to overhear a conversation between Dora her own maid, and another mulatto girl; in which Dora averred to her companion that she had heard from no less authority than Squire Fitzsimmons's man Cato, "who always

wore a blue coat, be the colour what it may, that the squire was dead in love with Miss Lucinda, as might be seen from many invisible *smyptoms*, and that both Dora and Cato had a certain *foregiving* that it would turn out a match at last, for all that the lady had the money on her side, which, to be sure, was rather unnatural; and that the wedding might be looked for *momently*."

In the course of the next quarter of an hour, Miss Lucinda called Dora into her dressing-room, and presented her with a little Thibet shawl, which she had worn but once. Dora grinned understandingly: and from that time she contrived to be overheard so frequently in similar conversations, that much of the effect was diminished.

To resume the thread of our narrative,—Lucinda being one morning on a visit to her friend Miss Vernon, the latter adverted to the failure of the annual dancing party.

"What would the beaux say,"—exclaimed Lucinda, struck with a sudden idea,—"if the belles were to give a ball to *them*, by way of hinting our sense of their extraordinary remissness. Let us convince them, that according to the luminous and incontrovertible aphorism of the renowned Sam Patch, "some things may be done as well as others."

"Excellent," replied Miss Vernon, "the thought

is well worth pursuing. Let us try what we can make of it."

The two young ladies then proceeded to an animated discussion of the subject, and the more they talked of it, the better they liked it. They very soon moulded the idea into regular form: and as there was no time to be lost, they set out to call on several of their friends and mention it to them.

The idea, novel as it seemed, was seized on with avidity by all to whom it was suggested, and a secret conclave was held on the following morning at Miss Mandeville's house, where the ladies debated with closed doors, while the plan was organized and the particulars arranged: our heroine proposing much that she thought would "point the moral and adorn the tale."

Next day, notes of invitation to a ball given by the ladies, were sent round to the gentlemen; all of whom were surprised, and many mortified, for they at once saw the motive, and understood the implied reproof. Some protested that they should never have courage to go, and talked of declining the invitation. But the majority decided on accepting it, justly concluding that it was best to carry the thing off with a good grace; and having, besides, much curiosity to see how the ladies would *conduct*, if we may be pardoned a yankeeism.

Fitzsimmons declared that the delinquent beaux were rightly punished by this palpable hit of the belles. And he congratulated himself on having always voted in favour of the ball being given as formerly: secretly hoping that Miss Mandeville knew that *he* had not been one of the backsliders. We are tolerably sure that she *did* know it.

Eventually the invitations were all accepted, and the preparations went secretly but rapidly on, under the superintendence of Miss Mandeville and Miss Vernon. In the mean time, the gentlemen, knowing that they all looked conscious and foolish, avoided the ladies, and kept themselves as much out of their sight as possible; with the exception of Gordon Fitzsimmons, he being the only one that felt freedom to "wear his beaver up."

At length the eventful evening arrived. It had been specified in the notes that the ladies were to meet the gentlemen at the ball-room, which was a public one engaged for the occasion. Accordingly, the beaux found all the belles there before them: the givers of the fête having gone in their own conveyances, an hour in advance of the time appointed for their guests.

The six ladies that officiated as managers (and were all distinguished by a loop of blue riband drawn through their belts) met the gentlemen at the

door as they entered the ball-room, and taking their hands, conducted them to their seats with much mock civility. The gentlemen, though greatly ashamed, tried in vain to look grave.

The room was illuminated with astral lamps, whose silver rays shone out from clusters of blue and purple flowers, and with crystal chandeliers, whose pendant drops sparkled amid festoons of roses. The walls were painted of a pale and beautiful cream colour. Curtains of the richest crimson, relieved by their masses of shadow the brilliant lightness of the other decorations: their deep silken fringes reflected in the mirrors, whose polished surfaces were partially hidden by folds of their graceful drapery. The orchestra represented a splendid oriental tent; and the musicians were habited in uniform Turkish dresses, their white turbans strikingly contrasting their black faces.

At the opposite end of the room was an excellent transparency, executed by an artist from a sketch by Miss Mandeville. It depicted a medley of scenery and figures, but so skilfully and tastefully arranged as to have a very fine effect when viewed as a whole. There was a Virginian lady assisting her cavalier to mount his horse—a Spanish damsel under the lattice of her lover, serenading him with a guitar—a Swiss paysanne supporting the steps of

a chamois hunter as he timidly clambered up a rock —four Hindoo women carrying a Bramin in a palanquin—an English girl rowing a sailor in a boat —and many other anomalies of a similar description. Beneath the picture was a scroll fancifully ornamented, and containing the words "Le monde renversé."

That nothing might be wanting to the effect of the ball, the ladies had made a point of appearing this evening in dresses unusually splendid and recherché. The elegant form of Lucinda Mandeville was attired in a rich purple satin, bordered with gold embroidery, and trimmed round the neck with blond lace. Long full sleeves of the same material threw their transparent shade over her beautiful arms, and were confined at intervals with bands of pearls clasped with amethysts. A chain of pearls was arranged above the curls of her dark and glossy hair, crossing at the back of her head, and meeting in front, where it terminated in a splendid amethyst aigrette. Three short white feathers, tastefully disposed at intervals, completed the coiffure, which was peculiarly becoming to the noble and resplendent style of beauty that distinguished our heroine; though to a little slight woman with light hair and eyes, it would have been exactly the contrary.

"Did you ever see so princess-like a figure as

Miss Mandeville?" said young Rainsford to Gordon Fitzsimmons, "or features more finely chiselled?"

"I have never seen a princess," replied Fitzsimmons, "but from what I have heard, few of them look in reality as a princess should. Neither, I think, does the word *chiselled* apply exactly to features formed by a hand beside whose noble and beautiful creations the finest chef d'oeuvres of sculpture are as nothing. I like not to hear of the human face being *well cut* or *finely chiselled:* though these expressions have long been sanctioned by the currency of fashion. Why borrow from art a term, or terms, that so imperfectly defines the beauty of nature. When we look at a living face, with features more lovely than the imagination of an artist has ever conceived, or at a complexion blooming with health, and eyes sparkling with intelligence, why should our delight and our admiration be disturbed, by admitting any idea connected with a block of marble and the instruments that form it into shape?"

"But you must allow," said Rainsford, "that Miss Mandeville has a fine classic head."

"I acknowledge," replied Fitzsimmons, "the graceful contour of the heads called classic. On this side of the Atlantic we have few opportunities of judging of antique sculpture, except from casts

and engravings. But as to the faces of the nymphs and goddesses of Grecian art, I must venture to confess that they do not exactly comport with my ideas of female loveliness. Not to speak of their almost unvarying sameness (an evidence, I think, that they are not modelled from life, for nature never repeats herself) their chief characteristics are a cold regularity of outline, and an insipid straightness of nose and forehead, such as in a living countenance would be found detrimental to all expression. I know I am talking heresy: but I cannot divest myself of the persuasion, that a face with precisely the features that we are accustomed to admire in antique statuary, would, if clothed in flesh and blood, be scarcely considered beautiful."

"Perhaps so," said Rainsford, "but you surely consider Miss Mandeville beautiful?"

"The beauty of Lucinda Mandeville," replied Fitzsimmons, "is not that of a Grecian statue. It is the beauty of an elegant American lady, uniting all the best points of her countrywomen. Her figure is symmetry itself, and there is an ease, a grace, a dignity in her movements, which I have never seen surpassed. Her features are lovely in their form and charming in their expression, particularly her fine black eyes: and her complexion is unrivalled both in its bloom and its delicacy."

"What a pity that Lucinda does not hear all this!" remarked Miss Vernon, who happened to be near Fitzsimmons and his friend.

Fitzsimmons coloured, fearing that he had spoken with too much warmth: and, bowing to Miss Vernon, he took the arm of Rainsford, and went to another part of the room.

Miss Vernon, however, lost no time in finding Lucinda, and repeated the whole, verbatim, to her highly gratified friend, who tried to look indifferent, but blushed and smiled all the time she was listening: and who, from this moment, felt a sensible accession to her usual excellent spirits.

"Ladies," said Miss Vernon, "choose your partners for a cotillon."

For a few moments the ladies hesitated, and held back at the idea of so novel a beginning to the ball: and Fitzsimmons, much amused, made a sign to his friends not to advance. Miss Mandeville came forward with a smile on her lips, and a blush on her cheeks. The heart of Fitzsimmons beat quick; but she passed him, and curtseying to young Colesberry, who was just from college, and extremely diffident, she requested the honour of his hand, and led him, with as much composure as she could assume, to a cotillon that was forming in the centre of the room; he shrinking and apologizing all the while. And Miss Vernon engaged Fitzsimmons.

In a short time, all the ladies had provided themselves with partners. At first, from the singularity of their mutual situation, both beaux and belles felt themselves under considerable embarrassment, but gradually this awkwardness wore away, and an example being set by the master spirits of the assembly, there was much pleasantry on either side; all being determined to humour the jest, and sustain it throughout with as good a grace as possible.

When the cotillons were forming for the second set, nearly a dozen young ladies found themselves simultaneously approaching Gordon Fitzsimmons, each with the design of engaging him as a partner. And this empressement was not surprising, as he was decidedly the handsomest and most elegant man in the room.

"Well, ladies," said Fitzsimmons, as they almost surrounded him. "you must decide among yourselves which of you is to take me out. All I can do is to stand still and be passive. But I positively interdict any quarrelling about me."

"We have heard," said Miss Atherley, "of men dying of love, dying of grief, and dying from fear of death. We are now trying if it is not possible to make them die of vanity."

"True," replied Fitzsimmons, "we may say with Harry the Fifth at Agincourt—"He that outlives

this day, and comes safe home,"—"Will stand a-tip-toe when this day is named,"—added Miss Atherley, finishing the quotation.

Fitzsimmons did not reply; for his attention was at that moment engaged by seeing Miss Mandeville leading out Apesley Sappington, and apparently much diverted with his absurdities.

"Ladies," said Miss Atherley, looking round to her companions, "let us try a fair chance of Mr. Fitzsimmons—suppose we draw lots for him."

"Do—by all means," exclaimed Fitzsimmons. "Set me up at a raffle."

"No," replied Miss Atherley, "we cannot conveniently raffle for you, as we have no dice at hand. Another way will do as well."

She then plucked from her bouquet some green rose-leaves, and half concealing them between her fingers, she offered the stems to each of her companions in turn, saying—"Whoever draws the largest rose-leaf may claim the honour of Mr. Fitzsimmons's hand for the next set.

The lots were drawn, and the largest rose-leaf remained with Miss Atherley, who was a young lady of much beauty and vivacity, and whom her friends laughingly accused of foul play in contriving to hold it back, in which opinion Fitzsimmons assured them that he perfectly coincided. But Miss

Atherley, however, led him triumphantly to the cotillon which, fortunately for his partner, did not happen to be the one in which Lucinda Mandeville was engaged.

At the conclusion of each set, the ladies conducted the gentlemen to their seats, assisted them to the refreshments that were handed round, and stood by and fanned them. Most of the gentlemen took all this very well, but others were much disconcerted: particularly a grave knight-errant-looking Spaniard who (having but lately arrived, and understanding the language but imperfectly) conceived that it was the custom in America for ladies to give balls to gentlemen, and to wait on them during the evening. In this error he was mischievously allowed to continue: but so much was his gallantry shocked, that he could not forbear dropping on his knees to receive the attentions that were assiduously proffered to him: bowing gratefully on the fair hands that presented him with a glass of orgeat or a plate of ice-cream.—And he was so overcome with the honour, and so deeply penetrated with a sense of his own unworthiness, when Lucinda Mandeville invited him to dance with her, that she almost expected to see him perform kotou, and knock his head nine times against the floor.

Among others of the company was Colonel

Kingswood, a very agreeable bachelor, long past the meridian of life, but not quite old enough to marry a young girl, his mind, as yet, showing no symptoms of dotage. His fortune was not sufficient to make him an object of speculation, and though courteous to all, his attentions were addressed exclusively to none. He was much liked by his young friends of both sexes, all of them feeling perfectly at ease in his society. Though he rarely danced, he was very fond of balls, and had participated in the vexation of Gordon Fitzsimmons when the beaux had declined giving their Christmas fête to the belles.

In an interval between the sets, Lucinda suggested to a group of her fair companions, the propriety of asking Colonel Kingswood to dance; a compliment that he had not as yet received during the evening. "You know" said she "the Colonel sometimes dances, and now that the ladies have assumed the privilege of choosing their partners, courtesy requires that none of the gentlemen should be neglected."

But each declined asking Colonel Kingswood, on the plea that they had other partners in view.

"For my part," said Miss Osbrook, frankly, "I am just going to ask Mr. Wyndham. This is, perhaps, the only chance I shall ever have of dancing

with him, as I am quite certain he will never ask *me*."

"But, my dear Lucinda," said Miss Elgrove, "why not invite Colonel Kingswood yourself. There he is, talking to Mr. Fitzsimmons, near the central window. It is not magnanimous to propose to others what you are unwilling to do in propriâ personâ."

Lucinda had, in reality, but one objection to proposing herself as a partner to Colonel Kingswood, and that was, his being just then engaged in conversation with Gordon Fitzsimmous, whom she felt a sort of conscious reluctance to approach. However, she paused a moment, and then summoned courage to join the two gentlemen and proffer her request to the Colonel, even though Fitzsimmons was close at hand.

"My dear Miss Mandeville," said Colonel Kingswood, "I confess that I have not courage to avail myself of your very tempting proposal. As my fighting days are now over, I cannot stand the shot of the jealous eyes that will be directed at me from every part of the ball-room."

"I have seen you dance," remarked Lucinda, evading the application of his compliment.

"True," replied the Colonel, "but you might have observed that I never take out the *young*

ladies—always being so considerate as to leave them to the young gentlemen. I carry my disinterestedness so far as invaribly to select partners that are ni jeune, ni jolie: notwithstanding the remarks I frequently hear about well-matched pairs, &c."

"I am to understand, then," said Lucinda, "that you are mortifying me by a refusal."

"Come, now, be honest," returned Colonel Kingswood, "and change the word 'mortify' into *gratify*. But do not turn away. It is customary, you know, when a man is drawn for the militia and is unwilling to serve, to allow him to choose a substitute. Here then is mine. Advance, Mr. Fitzsimmons, and with such a partner I shall expect to see you 'rise from the ground like feather'd Mercury.'"

Fitzsimmons came forward with sparkling eyes and a heightened colour and offered his hand to Lucinda, whose face was suffused even to the temples. There were a few moments of mutual confusion, and neither party uttered a word till they had reached the cotillon. The music commenced as soon as they had taken their places, and Lucinda being desired by her opposite lady to lead, there was no immediate conversation. Our heroine called up all her pride, all her self-command, and all her native buoyancy of spirits; Fitzsimmons did the

same, and they managed in the intervals of the dance to talk with so much vivacity, that each was convinced that their secret was still preserved from the other.

When the set was over, they returned to the place in which they had left Colonel Kingswood, who received them with a smile.

"Well, Miss Mandeville," said he, "what pretty things have you been saying to your partner?"

"Ask Mr. Fitzsimmons," replied Lucinda.

"Not a single compliment could I extract from her," said Fitzsimmons; "she had not even the grace to imply her gratitude for doing me the honour of dancing with me, or rather, for my doing her the honour. Ah! that is it—is it not? I forgot the present mode of expression. It is so difficult for one night only to get out of the old phraseology. But she certainly expressed no gratitude."

"I owed you none," replied Lucinda, "for, like Malvolio, you have had greatness thrust upon you. You know you are only Colonel Kingswood's substitute."

"Well," resumed Fitzsimmons, "have I not done my best to make "the substitute shine brightly as the king."

"Recollect that the king is now by," said Colonel Kingswood. "But Miss Mandeville, you must

go through your part. Consider that to-night is the only opportunity the gentlemen may ever have of hearing how adroitly the ladies can flatter them."

"It is not in the bond," replied Lucinda.

"What is not?"

"That the ladies should flatter the gentlemen."

"Excuse me," said Colonel Kingswood; "the ladies having voluntarily taken the responsibility, the gentlemen must insist on their going regularly through the whole ball with all its accompaniments, including compliments, flattery and flirtation, and a seasoning of genuine courtship, of which last article there is always more or less at every large party. And as it appears, that Miss Mandeville has not faithfully done her part during the dance, she must make amends by doing it now."

"On the latter subject," said Fitzsimmons, "Miss Mandeville can need no prompting. Her own experience must have made her familiar with courtship in all its varieties."

"Of course," resumed the Colonel. "So, Miss Mandeville, you can be at no loss in what manner to begin."

"And am I to stand here and be courted?" said Fitzsimmons.

"Now do not be frightened," observed the Colonel, "and do not look round, as if you were medi-

tating an escape. I will stand by and see how you acquit yourself in this new and delightful situation. Come, Miss Mandeville, begin."

"What sort of courtship will you have?" said Lucinda, who could not avoid laughing. "The sentimental, the prudential, or the downright?"

"The downright, by all means," cried the Colonel. "No, no," said Fitzsimmons. "Let me hear the others first. The downright would be too overwhelming without a previous preparation."

Lucinda affected to hide her face with a feather that had fallen from her head during the dance, and which she still held in her hand, and uttered hesitatingly and with downcast eyes—

"If I could hope to be pardoned for my temerity in thus presuming to address one whose manifest perfections so preponderate in the scale, when weighed against my own demerits"—

"Oh! stop, stop," exclaimed Fitzsimmons, "this will never do!"

"Why, it is just the way a poor young fellow courted me last summer," replied Lucinda. "Come, let me go on. Conscious as I am that I might as well 'love a bright and particular star and think to wed it' "—

"You will never succeed in that strain," said Fitzsimmons, laughing. "You must try another."

"Well, then," continued Lucinda, changing her tone, "here is the prudential mode. Mr. Gordon Fitzsimmons, thinking it probable (though I speak advisedly) that you may have no objection to change your condition, and believing (though perhaps I may be mistaken) that we are tolerably well suited to each other—I being my own mistress, and you being your own master—perceiving no great disparity of age, or incompatability of temper"—

"I like not this mode either," interrupted Fitzsimmons, it is worse than the other.

"Do you think so," resumed Lucinda. "It is just the way a rich old fellow courted me last winter."

"Nothing is more likely," said Fitzsimmons. "But neither of these modes will succeed with me."

"Then," observed the Colonel, "there is nothing left but the plain downright."

"Mr. Fitzsimmons, will you marry me?" said Lucinda.

"With all my heart and soul," replied Fitzsimmons, taking her hand.

"Oh! you forget yourself," exclaimed Lucinda, struggling to withdraw it. "You are not half so good a comedian as I am. You should look down, and play with your guard-chain; and then look up, and tell me you are perfectly happy in your single

state—that marriage is a lottery—that our acquaintance has been too slight for either of us to form a correct opinion of the other. In short, you should say no."

"By heavens!" exclaimed Fitzimmons, kissing her beautiful hand! "I cannot say no—even in jest."

Lucinda's first sensation was involuntary delight. But in a moment she was startled by the conviction that she had unthinkingly gone too far. The native delicacy of woman thrilled every nerve in her frame, and her cheeks varied alternately from red to pale. Shocked at the length to which she had inadvertently carried a dialogue begun in badinage, and confused, mortified, and distressed at its result, she forcibly disengaged her hand from that of Fitzsimmons, and turning to a lady and gentleman that she saw passing, she said she would accompany them to the other end of the room. Arrived there, she seated herself in the midst of a group that were warmly engaged in discussing the comparative merits of Spanish dances and Polish dances: and she endeavoured to collect her scattered thoughts, and compose the flutter of her spirits. But it was in vain—the more she reflected on the little scene that had just taken place, the more she regretted it.

"What must Fitzsimmons think of me?" was

her predominant idea. "His gallantry as a gentleman prompted his reply, but still how sadly I must have sunk in his opinion. That I should have allowed myself to be drawn into such a conversation! That I should have carried a foolish jest so far! But I will punish myself severely. I will expiate my folly by avoiding all farther intercourse with Gordon Fitzsimmons; and from this night we must become strangers to each other."

The change in Lucinda's countenance and manner was now so obvious that several of her friends asked her if she was ill. To these questions she answered in the negative: but her cheeks grew paler, and the tears sprang to her eyes.

Miss Vernon now approached, and said to her in a low voice—"My dear Lucinda, I perceive that you are suffering under some contre-temps; but such things, you know, are always incidental to balls, and all other assemblages where every one expects unqualified delight. We should be prepared for these contingencies, and when they do occur, the only alternative is to try to pass them over as well as we can, by making an effort to rally our spirits so as to get through the remainder of the evening with apparent composure, or else to plead indisposition and go home. Which course will you take?"

"Oh! how gladly would I retire," exclaimed Lu-

cinda, scarcely able to restrain her tears. "But were I to do so, there are persons who might put strange constructions—or rather the company might be induced to make invidious remarks"—

"By no means," interrupted Miss Vernon. "A lady may at any time be overcome with the heat and fatigue of a ball-room—nothing is more common."

"But," said Lucinda, "were I to leave the company—were I to appear as if unable to stay—were I to evince so much emotion—he would, indeed, suppose me in earnest."

"He!" cried Miss Vernon, looking surprised. "Of whom are you speaking, dear Lucinda? Who is it that would suppose you in earnest?"

"No matter," replied Lucinda, "I spoke inadvertently; I forgot myself; I knew not what I was saying."

"Dearest Lucinda," exclaimed Miss Vernon, "I am extremely sorry to find you so discomposed. What can have happened? At a more convenient time, may I hope that you will tell me?"

"Oh! no, no," replied Lucinda, "it is impossible. I cannot speak of it even to you. Ask me no further. I am distressed, humiliated, shocked at myself (and she covered her face with her hands). But I cannot talk about it, now or ever."

"Lucinda, my dear Lucinda," said Miss Vernon, "your agitation will be observed."

"Then I must endeavour to suppress it," replied Lucinda, starting up. "I *must* stay till this unfortunate ball is over; my going home would seem too pointed."

"Let me then intreat you, my dear girl," said Miss Vernon, "to exert yourself to appear as usual. Come, take my arm, and we will go and talk nonsense to Apesley Sappington."

Lucinda did make an effort to resume her usual vivacity. But it was evidently forced. She relapsed continually: and she resembled an actress that is one moment playing with her wonted spirit, and the next moment forgetting her part.

"So," said Colonel Kingswood to Fitzsimmons, after Lucinda had left them together, "I am to infer that you are really in love with Miss Mandeville?"

"Ardently—passionately—and I long to tell her so in earnest," replied Fitzsimmons; and he took up the feather that Lucinda in her agitation had dropped from her hand.

"Of course, then, you will make your proposal to-morrow morning," said the Colonel.

"No," replied Fitzsimmons, concealing the feather within the breast of his coat. "I cannot so

wound her delicacy. I see that she is disconcerted at the little scene into which we inadvertently drew her, and alarmed at the idea that perhaps she allowed herself to go too far. I respect her feelings, and I will spare them. But to me she has long been the most charming woman in existence."

"What, then," inquired the Colonel, "has retarded the disclosure of your secret, if secret it may be called?"

"Her superiority in point of fortune," replied Fitzsimmons. "You know the small amount of property left me by my father, and that in my profession I am as yet but a beginner; though I must own that my prospects of success are highly encouraging. To say nothing of my repugnance to reversing the usual order of the married state, and drawing the chief part of our expenditure from the money of my wife, how could I expect to convince her that my motives in seeking her hand were otherwise than mercenary?"

"Are they?" said Colonel Kingswood, with a half smile.

"No, on my soul they are not," replied Fitzsimmons earnestly. "Were our situations reversed, I would without a moment's hesitation lay all that I possessed at her feet, and think myself the most honoured, the most fortunate of men if I could ob-

tain a gem whose intrinsic value requires not the aid of a gold setting."

"Do you suppose, then," said Colonel Kingswood, "that a lovely and elegant woman like Miss Lucinda Mandeville, can have so humble an opinion of herself as to suppose that she owes all her admirers to her wealth, and that there is nothing attractive about her but her bank-stock and her houses?"

"Since I first knew Miss Mandeville," replied Fitzsimmons, "I have secretly cherished the hope of being one day worthy of her acceptance. And this hope has incited me to be doubly assiduous in my profession, with the view of ultimately acquiring both wealth and distinction. And when I have made a name, as well as a fortune, I shall have no scruples in offering myself to her acceptance."

"And before all this is accomplished," observed the Colonel,"—"Some lucky fellow, with a ready made fortune, and a ready made name, or more probably some bold adventurer with neither, may fearlessly step in, and carry off the prize."

"There is madness in the thought!" exclaimed Fitzsimmons, putting his hand to his forehead.

"Did it never strike you before?" inquired the Colonel.

"It has, it has," cried Fitzsimmons, "a thousand

times has it passed like a dark cloud over the sunshine of my hopes."

"Take my advice," said the Colonel, "and address Miss Mandeville at once."

"Fool that I was!" exclaimed Fitzsimmons, "how could I be so utterly absurd—so devoid of all tact, as to reply to her unguarded badinage in a tone of reality. No wonder she looked so disconcerted, so shocked. At this moment how she must hate me!"

"I am not so sure of that," observed the Colonel; "but take my advice, and let the etourderie of this evening be repaired by the opening it affords you of disclosing your real feelings to the object of your love."

"I cannot," replied Fitzsimmons, "I cannot, after what has passed, run the risk of giving farther offence to her delicacy."

"Her delicacy," remarked the Colonel, "may be more deeply offended by your delaying the disclosure. But we must separate for the present. If Miss Mandeville sees us talking together so earnestly, she may justly suppose herself the object of discussion."

The two gentlemen parted; and Fitzsimmons, feeling it impossible to speak to Lucinda again that

evening, and having no inclination to talk to any one else, withdrew from the ball, and passed two hours in traversing his own room.

After the departure of her lover, Lucinda felt more at her ease; particularly as Colonel Kingswood was so considerate as to avoid approaching her. During the remainder of the evening, she exerted herself with such success as to recall a portion of her natural sprightliness, and of the habitual self-command that she had acquired from living in the world of fashion.

Supper was announced. The ladies, persisting in their assumed characters, conducted the gentlemen to the table, where the profusion and variety of the delicacies that composed the feast, could only be equalled by the taste and elegance with which they were decorated and arranged. The belles filled the plates of the beaux, and poured out the wine for them; and many pretty things were said about ambrosia and nectar.

At the conclusion of the banquet, the band in the orchestra, on a signal from some of the gentlemen, struck up the symphony to a favourite air that chiefly owes its popularity to the words with which Moore has introduced it into his melodies; and "To ladies eyes a round boys," was sung in concert by all the

best male voices in the room. The song went off with much eclat, and made a pleasant conclusion to the evening.

After the belles had curtsied out the beaux, and retired to the cloak-room to equip themselves for their departure, they found the gentlemen all waiting to see them to their carriages and assist in escorting them home: declaring that as the play was over, and the curtain dropped, they must be allowed to resume their real characters.

When Lucinda Mandeville arrived at her own house, and found herself alone in her dressing-room, all the smothered emotions of the evening burst forth without restraint, and leaning her head on the arm of the sofa, she indulged in a long fit of tears before she proceeded to take off her ornaments. But when she went to her psyche for that purpose, she could not help feeling that hers was not a face and figure to be seen with indifference, and that in all probability the unguarded warmth with which Fitzsimmons had replied to her mock courtship, was only the genuine ebullition of a sincere and ardent passion.

It was long before she could compose herself to sleep, and her dreams were entirely of the ball and of Fitzsimmons. When she arose next morning, she determined to remain all day up stairs, and to see no visitors; rejoicing that the fatigue of the preced-

ing evening would probably keep most of her friends at home.

About noon Gordon Fitzsimmons, who had counted the moments till then, sent up his card with a penciled request to see Miss Mandeville. Terrified, agitated, and feeling as if she never again could raise her eyes to his face or open her lips in his presence; Lucinda's first thought was to reply that she was indisposed, but she checked herself from sending him such a message, first, because it was not exactly the truth, and secondly lest he should suppose that the cause of her illness might have some reference to himself. She therefore desired the servant simply to tell Mr. Fitzsimmons that Miss Mandeville could receive no visitors that day.

But Fitzsimmons was not now to be put off. He had been shown into one of the parlours, and going to the writing-case on the centre table, he took a sheet of paper, and addressed to her an epistle expressing in the most ardent terms his admiration and his love, and concluding with the hope that she would grant him an interview. There was not, of course, the slightest allusion to the events of the preceding evening. The letter was conceived with as much delicacy as warmth, and highly elevated the writer in the opinion of the reader. Still, she hesitated whether to see him or not. Her heart said yes—but

her pride said no. And at length she most heroically determined to send him a written refusal, not only of the interview but of himself, that in case he should have dared to presume that the unfortunate scene at the ball could possibly have meant any thing more than a jest, so preposterous an idea might be banished from his mind for ever.

In this spirit she commenced several replies to his letter, but found it impossible to indite them in such terms as to satisfy herself; and, after wasting half a dozen sheets of paper with unsuccessful beginnings, she committed them all to the fire. Finally, she concluded that she could explain herself more effectually in a personal interview, whatever embarrassment the sight of him might occasion her. But not being able at this time to summon courage to meet him face to face, she sent down a note of three lines, informing Mr. Fitzsimmons that she would see him in the evening at seven o'clock.

Several of Lucinda's friends called to talk about the ball, but she excused herself from seeing them, and passed the remainder of the day up stairs, in one long thought of Fitzsimmons, and in dwelling on the painful idea that the avowal of his sentiments had, in all probability, been elicited by her indiscretion of the preceding evening. "But," said she to herself, "I will steadily persist in declining his ad-

dresses; I will positively refuse him, for unless I do so, I never can recover my own self-respect. I will make this sacrifice to delicacy, and even then I shall never cease to regret my folly in having allowed myself to be carried so far in the thoughtless levity of the moment."

Being thus firmly resolved on dismissing her admirer, it is not to be supposed that Lucinda could attach the smallest consequence to looking well that evening, during what she considered their final interview. Therefore, we must, of course, attribute to accident the length of time she spent in considering which she should wear of two new silk dresses; one being of the colour denominated *ashes of roses*—the other of the tint designated as *monkey's sighs*. Though ashes of roses seemed emblematic of an extinguished flame, yet monkey's sighs bore more direct reference to a rejected lover, which, perhaps, was the reason that she finally decided on it. There was likewise a considerable demur about a canezou and a pelerine, but eventually the latter carried the day. And it was long, also, before she could determine on the most becoming style of arranging her hair, wavering between plats and bows. At last the bows had it.

Mr. Fitzsimmons was announced a quarter before seven, his watch being undoubtedly too fast. Lu-

cinda came down in ill-concealed perturbation, repeating to herself, as she descended the stairs, "Yes—my rejection of him shall be positive—and my adherence to it firm and inexorable."

Whether it was so we will not presume to say, but this much is certain—that in a month from that time, the delinquent gentlemen made the amende honorable, by giving the ladies a most splendid ball, at which the ci-devant Miss Mandeville and Mr. Gordon Fitzsimmons made their first appearance in public as bride and bridegroom, to the great delight of Colonel Kingswood.

THE END.

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